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ABSTRACT

Interviews were conducted with 18 key management decision makers at the national level of the Parent and Child Center (PCC) program, and a wide variety of relevant providers and consumers of management information of the local level of the program. The purpose of the study was to develop recommendations for a management information system (MIS) for the PCC program. The study is presented in the following chapters: 1. Summary of Recommendations; 2. Study Objectives and Approach; 3. Guidelines for a Workable Management Information System for Parent and Child Centers; 4. The Basic Elements of the Recommended Management Information System Design; 5. PCC Management Information System Implementation; 6. (Appendix) Field Work: Findings and Related Recommendations. (DB)

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MANAGEMENT INFORMATION FOR THE PARENT-CHILD CENTER PROGRAM

Phase I: Findings and Recommendations

Final Report

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Peter Wolff skillfully edited this final report and Marjorie Gorman served admirably as project secretary.

David Warner
Project Director

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CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The thirty-three Parent and Child Centers currently in operation are generating a considerable amount of data[*]. However, current reporting requirements have tended to produce data in a form that does not lend itself to management decision-making on either the local or the federal level. Consequently, the Office of Child Development, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare has determined that a management information system (MIS) should be established to provide management decision makers for the Parent and Child Center (PCC) program with timely and useable information.

Abt Associates Inc. interviewed eighteen key management decision makers at the national level of the PCC program, and a wide variety of relevant providers and consumers of management information on the local level of the program. Important kinds of management decisions and information needs of high priority in making those decisions were identified at every level of program operation. These findings are summarized in Table I.

The management information system proposed by Abt Associates Inc. is built around those important management decisions and the information necessary for making them.

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[*] Information on program objectives, community characteristics, social services to participants, health services to participants, volunteer services, expenditures, uses of staff time, and the developmental progress of focal children abounds.

Table I

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION NEEDS FOR THE PCC PROGRAM

Level		Kinds of Information Needed									
		Participant Characteristics	Services to Participants	Program Description	Staff Characteristics	Staff Utilization	Line-Item Costs	Functional Costs	Community	Other PCC's	Project Advisor's Reports
PCC (c.f. Table II)	Need?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Form	Summary and for each family & individual	Summary and for each family and individual	Summary and detailed	Summary	Summary and by individual	Summary by major line-item categories	Summary	Summary	Summary	As specified
	Frequency	Q&A	Q&A	A	Q	Q&A	M (cumulative)	Q&A	A	A	M
Grantee and Delegate Agency (c.f. Table III)	Need?	✓		✓			✓				
	Form	Summary		Summary			Summary				
	Frequency	Q		A			Q				
OCD (c.f. Table IV)	Need?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Form	Summary for each PCC; summary of all PCC's	Summary for each PCC; summary of all PCC's	Summary for each PCC; summary for all PCC's	Summary for each PCC	Summary for each PCC	Summary for each PCC by major line-item	Summary of all PCC's; summary for each PCC, by program component	Summary of all PCC's, summary for each PCC		As specified for each PCC
	Frequency	Q&A	Q&A	A	Q&A	Q&A	Q&A	Q&A	A		M

Q = Quarterly
A = Annually
M = Monthly

The Proposed Management Information System

Abt Associates Inc. recommends that all PCC's be financed on a uniform quarterly cycle, and that data reporting be tied directly to the funding cycle. The recommended management information system concentrates data collection on indicators of program orientation, contract compliance, service to program participants, staff utilization, and financial status. It proposes that these data be gathered on standard, pre-coded data collection forms, and that they be reported to a "national data coordinator" in Washington, D. C. on a uniform, quarterly basis. In short, information collection on the local level is to be re-oriented, reduced, simplified, and standardized.

On the local level, data are to be handled manually; on the national level, data are to be processed by computer. On both levels, responsibility for data collection, storage, and reporting is to be centralized.

Meaningful information for management decision-making is to flow both toward the Office of Child Development and from the Office of Child Development toward local Parent and Child Centers. OCD is to get data on the characteristics of program participants and staff; services to participants; staff utilization; expenditures to date; and a narrative report on local program performance, opportunities, and problems. In turn, OCD is to furnish local PCC's with a quarterly analysis of the local PCC's expenditures by functional service, quantitative information about the operations of other PCC's, and a newsletter containing program "vignettes," case histories of success stories, special operating problems, and recommendations for the use of little known resources.

The assignments that must be undertaken to implement the proposed MIS are also identified. The most noteworthy of these assignments are: involvement of users in detailing the system design and developing a strategy for the system's implementation; the development of a user's manual; the development of file specifications; a field test of both the manual and computerized portions of the system; the standardization of PCC job titles and funding cycles; and the provision of on-site technical assistance to assist local PCC changeover to the new system.

Policy Decisions

Ten policy decisions are required before the recommendations of this report can be adopted:

Policy Decision #1 - MIS or Information Reporting System: -- Abt Associates Inc. recommends the adoption of a "management information system" (MIS), but we recognize that many of the needs of the Office of Child Development can be achieved by the adoption of a less demanding "information reporting system."

An MIS differs from an "information reporting sytem" in (a) the purpose of information collection and (b) the use of information once it is collected. An MIS links data collection to key management decisions, such as funding, budgeting, program evaluation, and program planning. The selection of the data to collect and the timing of the flow of that data are geared to important management decisions. On the other hand, if important management decisions are not going to be linked to, and even dependent upon, the flow of relevant information to key management decision makers in a timely fashion, an MIS is not necessary. If this is the case, a less costly and easier to maintain "information reporting system" should be adopted. Whereas an MIS presents information in a form that simplifies important management decisions, an "information reporting system" simply makes useful information available to a variety of users. It is not linked to a decision-making process. It is not designed to draw the implications of the data to a decision maker's attention. Its requirements for timeliness are less stringent than those of an MIS.

Policy Decision # 2 - Standardized Funding Cycles for PCC's:-- The decision on policy question #1 affects the decision on this policy question as well.

Currently, only eight of the thirty-three Parent and Child Centers in operation have grant renewal dates that coincide with the start of a new federal quarter. The other twenty-five centers have a variety of different grant periods that do not coincide. These facts have two important consequences: (1) yearly financial and program information for different Parent and Child Centers cannot be easily or accurately aggregated, and (2) under the present system, there cannot be a uniform management decision-making process related to the refunding of local PCC's either on the national level or on the local level. If we assume a standardized reporting year, but not a standardized funding cycle, some refunding proposals would be based on three quarters of data, while other would be based on only two quarters of data. Thus, refunding decisions could not be based on comparable, current data from all PCC's. The consequent tendency will be to disregard, or at the very least minimize, the importance of MIS data in making refunding decisions - the single most important set of management decisions affecting the local PCC's. It would also be difficult to make decisions regarding the allocation of PCC funds on a basis other than that currently being used, which is essentially equal financial support for all PCC's regardless of performance or national priorities.

The standardization of funding cycles can only be accomplished by a policy decision within the Office of Child Development. If made affirmatively this decision will have to be accompanied by a reallocation of OCD personnel at critical points in the funding cycle. Currently, all four national coordinators for the PCC program share a single secretary. If the funding cycles for the thirty-three Parent and Child Centers are staggered so that approximately one-fourth of these centers come up for refunding at the beginning of each federal quarter, the secretary for the national coordinators will be swamped and the system will break down. Consequently, additional secretarial service will be

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required just before each new federal quarter if PCC funding cycles are standardized.

Furthermore, the standardization of PCC funding cycles should be accompanied by the adoption of a uniform management decision-making process on the local level regarding the submission of the grant renewal application. Many directors feel the need to organize the decision-making process involved in preparing the grant renewal application. At the present time, they all too often find themselves putting together a grant application at the last minute without sufficient forethought about its operational implications for the succeeding year or adequate reflection on the program successes and failures of the previous year. Thus, the opportunity for program planning and constructive program development afforded by the annual grant renewal application is not fully utilized.

A well organized management decision-making process should include: (a) a reminder to the local PCC staff by the local data coordinator at the beginning of the quarter leading to refunding that the grant renewal application will be due during the quarter, (b) the collection of relevant data for the grant application by the local PCC data coordinator, (c) a visit by the project advisor to the local PCC to help the management begin adressing the program planning questions implicit in the grant renwal application, (d) a visit by the national coordinator to assist the local PCC focus their program planning question in terms of the application for grant renewal, and (e) appropriate arrangements for involving the PAC, the delegate and/or the grantee agency in the decision-making process. In short, it should involve a time schedule that links management information to a uniform decision-making process. Without such a process, neither the availability of good management information nor the standardization of federal funding cycles for PCC's will insure the incorporation of these tools in management decision-making at the local level.

Policy Decision #3 - Requiring Monthly Reports on PCC Expenditures by Grantee to PCC Management as a Condition of the OCD Grant: -- At the present time, only seven of the thirty-three PCC's in operation maintain their own accounting books. In the great majority of cases, regular reporting of expenditures to local PCC directors from the grantee or delegate agency does not occur. Consequently, a very important source of management information is not easily or regularly available to a key local PCC management decision maker, and many PCC directors cannot relate expenses to services.

Abt Associates Inc. recommends that grantees be required, as a condition of the OCD grant of support to PCC's, to submit monthly reports on PCC expenditures to the director of the PCC. This recommendation, of course, requires a policy decision by OCD.

Policy Decision #4 - Hire a National Data Coordinator for the PCC MIS: -- Difficulty was encountered in attempting to transfer the activities of the now defunct "National PCC Reporting System" from a private contractor to the federal government. Part of this difficulty was encountered because of a lack of continuity in responsibility for coordinating data collection at the national level. Part of the difficulty was caused by the addition of the responsibility for coordinating national PCC data collection to the work load of people having other demanding responsibilities.

Abt Associates Inc. recommends that a national data coordinator be hired for the proposed PCC management information system. If a hiring freeze prohibits the hiring of a national data coordinator by OCD, Abt Associates Inc. recommends that such a person be hired by the contractor to assist with the implementation of the MIS for the PCC program. As an alternative, OCD could redistribute the assignments of its staff, thereby freeing an existing OCD staff member for this duty.

In any case, there is a distinct advantage to having an OCD employee or surrogate involved as a data coordinator in the implementation of the MIS. Such an individual will assist in keeping the MIS rooted in the reality of continuing operation, and will provide an important element of continuity in the system's operation.

Policy Decision #5 - Standardized Job Titles: -- The standardization of job titles for the employees of the thirty-three PCC's will permit the establishment of time utilization norms by functional activity for each job. This step will simplify and possibly even eliminate the need for local PCC's to report staff utilization by staff member to Washington.

Of more importance, however, is the value of standardized job titles to OCD management in making key decisions about funding, staff utilization, and contract compliance. Standardized job titles, for example, will make it possible to determine the mix of professional staff positions to non-professional positions without asking the question directly.

Policy Decision #6 - Alter the Role of the Project Advisor: -- Abt Associates Inc. recommends that the role of the project advisor be altered to permit (a) copies of the written reports sent to OCD to be made available to the PCC director of the center visited, and (b) the project advisor to assist PCC management in reviewing past performance, setting program goals and indicators of achievement toward those goals, and assessing the implications of alternative management decisions for the year ahead just prior to drafting the annual application for grant renewal. It is unlikely that local PCC management will be able to step back and objectively assess past performance and future goals for their programs without outside assistance. While project advisors are not the only source of this support, they do constitute the most clearly available resource for the type of assistance needed.

Policy Decision #7 - Field Test the PCC MIS or Use a Phased Implementation Plan that Does Not Require a Field Test: -- The policy choice between implementation plans involves a tradeoff in risks. Under the phased implementation plan that does not require a field test, the proposed MIS can be tested under actual operating conditions and the system can be fully implemented in approximately half the time otherwise required. However, if significant problems emerge during the course of implementation, changes will be more costly and more annoying to local PCC's.

On the other hand, a field test will reduce the potential problems and risks associated with phased implementation. It will also, however, never completely simulate on-line conditions and it will be much more time consuming than phased implementation without a field test.

If major revisions in the MIS or in the orientation of the PCC program are anticipated, a field test would be advisable. But, if major revisions are not anticipated and the basic management information reporting requirements are expected to remain relatively stable, a field test should not be required. An OCD policy decision on the question is required.

Policy Decision #8 - Newsletter: -- Abt Associates Inc. recommends the establishment of a quarterly newsletter to help produce useful information flow in two directions. The newsletter can be an important resource for eliminating unnecessary trial and error learning. It can also help facilitate the best use of good management information, as it becomes available.

However, the newsletter can become an unnecessary burden and expense, if it is not carefully designed and well received.

Policy Decision #9 - Field Test of Sending all In-take Forms to the National Data Coordinator: -- One of the policy questions facing

OCD is whether or not to experiment with sending copies of all PCC in-take forms to the national data coordinator. While Abt Associates Inc. has not recommended that copies of all in-take forms be sent to the national data coordinator as a part of its proposed system, we do think that the concept is worth field testing.

The presence of copies of local PCC in-take records in Washington will greatly expand the ability of the system to furnish useful management information to key management decision makers both in Washington and at local PCC's. However, the cost of collecting and verifying the reliability of the additional information may greatly outweigh its benefit. We do not know, at this time, precisely how important the additional information may be to PCC management decision makers or how difficult it may be to make certain of the validity of the additional information.

Policy Decision #10 - The Provision of Two Types of Technical Assistance: -- Abt Associates Inc. recommends that two types of technical assistance be made available to PCC directors and data coordinators: (1) a workshop at which the system is explained and where PCC directors and data coordinators develop a plan for collecting the necessary data and a plan for using that data in management decision-making, and (2) the provision of on-site technical assistance. We believe that both types of assistance will be required to implement a well functioning MIS, but it maybe determined that only one form of assistance will be needed.

Recommendations are detailed in each of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2
STUDY OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The purpose of this study was to develop recommendations for a management information system (MIS) for the Parent and Child Center (PCC) program. The recommendations summarized in the last chapter are based on an analysis of the management information needs of the Office of Child Development (OCD), its management decision-making agents, and those of the thirty-three local Parent and Child Centers currently in operation. A detailed review of fieldwork, findings and related recommendations will be found in the Appendix (Chapter 6).

According to the guidelines issued by the Office of Child Development, the proposed MIS must meet the following criteria:

- Provide management with timely, relevant, and accurate information for decision-making.
- Be demonstrably useful to the PCC's and to OCD in improving the delivery of needed services to people.
- Be feasible, given the kinds and amounts of reasources currently or potentially available to collect and process information.
- Minimize the burden placed on PCC's for collecting and processing information.
- Minimize the need for expertise in data processing at the PCC level.
- Be sensitive to the rich diversity in PCC programs.
- Be consistent with current reporting requirements, to the extent possible, in order to

- Minimize duplication of effort resulting from multiple reporting requirements.
- Be adaptable to possible future modifications of the PCC program.
- Avoid undesireable reorientation of the PCC program as a consequence of the MIS.
- Avoid the problems encountered by the now defunct "National PCC Reporting System."

Description of the Parent and Child Center Program

The Parent and Child Center program was established in 1967 by Presidential directive. It was designed as a pilot program to serve low income families with children under three years of age. The program is expected to help low income families living in areas of acute poverty to function independently and effectively as family units by providing them with comprehensive child development and family services.

Initially twenty-five Parent and Child Centers were funded. There are now thirty-three PCC's in operation. These centers serve parents and children with a wide variety of different backgrounds; they are located in areas of rural and urban poverty.

Unlike most programs for very young children, the PCC program makes every effort to stimulate and reinforce positive child development by involving the parents and siblings as well as focal children in the program. However, each PCC is also encouraged to develop its own service pattern. Consequently, some PCC's have control groups to help them measure progress in their work with focal children, but most centers do not. Some centers provide direct services to participants in their homes; other centers do not; and still other centers provide both kinds of service. Some PCC's have even arranged to place focal children in alternate homes during certain days of the week as a possible way of expanding the learning environment of focal children. Some PCC's concentrate heavily on a few families, while others serve more families less extensively. In short, although all PCC's share general common goals, they differ widely in program emphasis, philosophy, mode of operation, staff capacity, community resources, clientele and management.

With one exception, every PCC is but a single component of a much larger community service effort managed by a grantee agency. A grantee agency is the legal recipient of federal funds.

Sometimes a grantee contracts with another agency and thereby delegates its authority to operate a program to a second agency, or a delegate agency.

Grantees or their delegate agencies, together with representatives of the communities (Policy Advisory Committees), select a director for the Parent and Child Center. This director, with the advice and counsel of the grantee or its delegate agency and the center's Policy Advisory Committee, operates the local Parent and Child Center program. (See Illustrations I and II.)

As a consequence of this diffusion of responsibility, most PCC's are dependent upon either a grantee agency or a delegate agency for paying bills, purchasing supplies, and keeping abreast of PCC operating costs. Occasionally these problems are handled amicably often they are not.

A "project advisor" is a professional consultant with special expertise in child care. A project advisor is assigned to each PCC. He provides technical assistance to the PCC, management

Illustration I

ORGANIZATION OF PCC PROGRAM

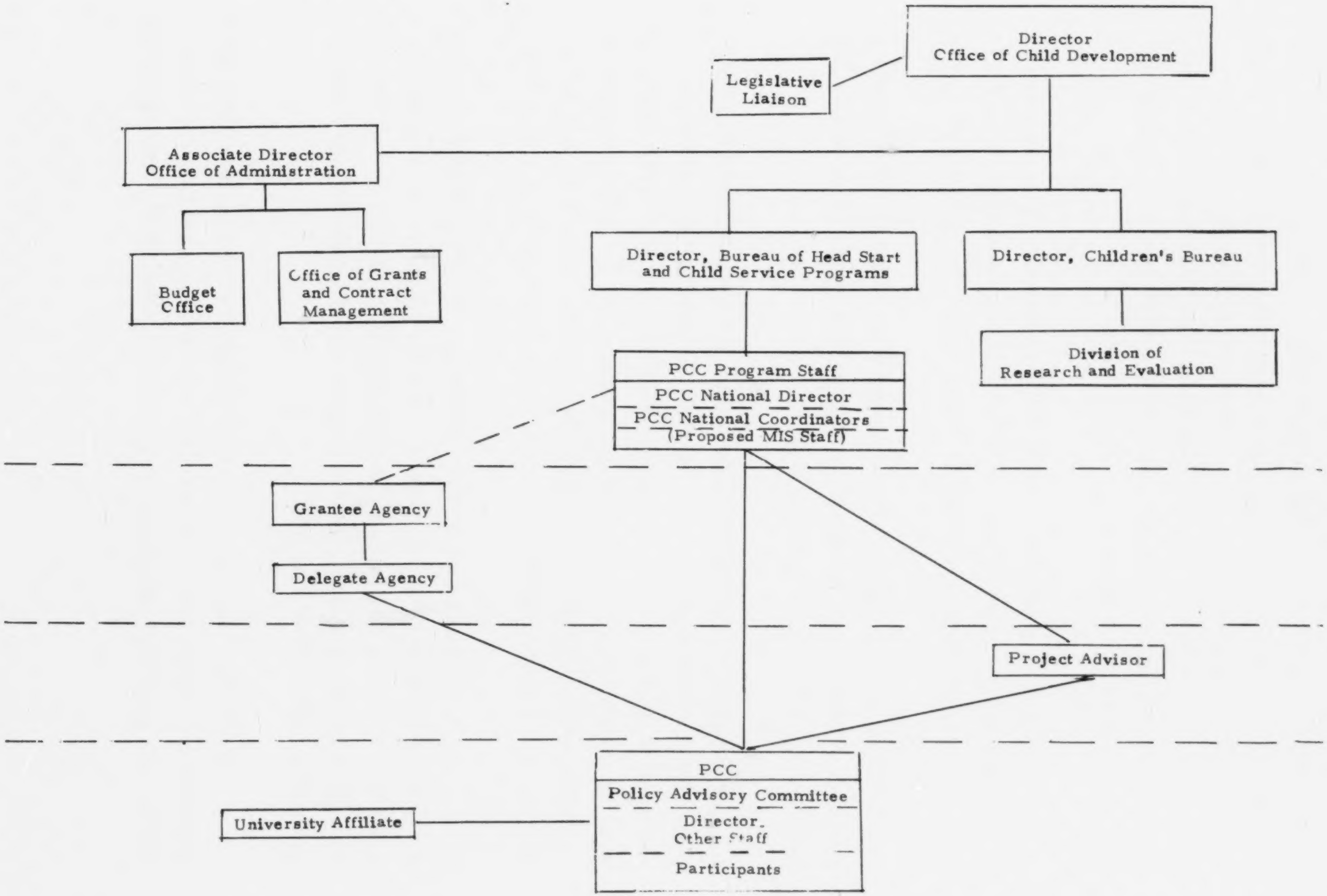
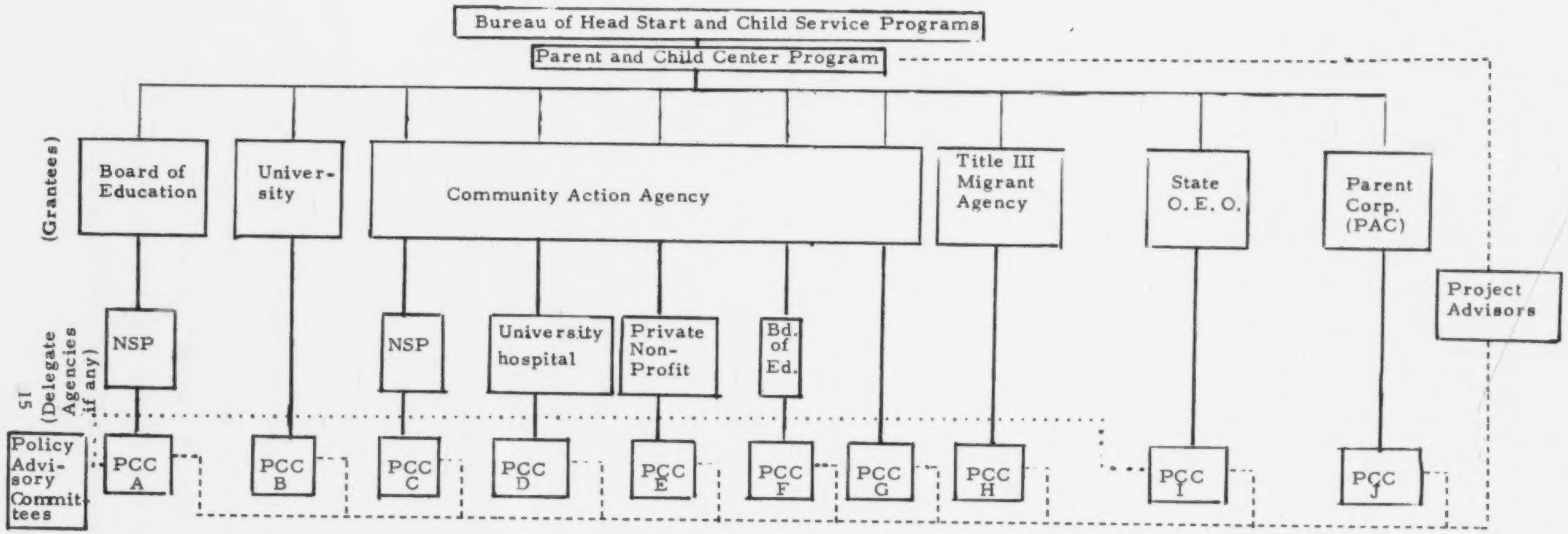

Director
Office of Child Development
Legislative Liaison
Associate Director
Office of Administration
Budget Office
Office of Grants and Contract Management
Director, Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs
Director, Children's Bureau
Division of Research and Evaluation
PCC Program Staff
PCC National Director
PCC National Coordinators
(Proposed MIS Staff)
Grantee Agency
Delegate Agency
Project Advisor
PCC
Policy Advisory Committee
Director, Other Staff
Participants
University Affiliate

Illustration II

PCC ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE


Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs
Parent and Child Center Program
(Grantees)
Board of Education
Univer-sity
Community Action Agency
Title III Migrant Agency
State O. E. O.
Parent Corp. (PAC)
Project Advisors
(Delegate Agencies if any)
NSP
NSP
University hospital
Private Non-Profit
Bd. of Ed.
Policy Advi-sory Commit-tees
PCC A
PCC B
PCC C
PCC D
PCC E
PCC F
PCC G
PCC H
PCC I
PCC J

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Phila-delphia	Lafayette	Cincinnati Louisville New York St. Louis Washington (D. C.)	Baltimore	Boston Cleveland Los Angeles	Detroit	Barton Carmi Chattanooga Chicago Dallas Fayetteville Honolulu Huntington Jacksonville Kotzebue Menomenie Newark Oakland Omaha Portland Atlanta	Pasco Pine Ridge	Hardins-berg Minnea-polis	La Junta

information to OCD, and reviews the PCC's application for grant renewal. He provides some liaison between local Parent and Child Centers and the Office of Child Development.

Most of the communication between (a) PCC's, grantees, and delegate agencies and (b) the Office of Child Development, however, is handled by national PCC program specialists, who are usually referred to simply as "national coordinators" or "D. C. coordinators." There are four national coordinators. Each coordinator is assigned responsibility for assisting, monitoring, and evaluating from four to ten local PCC programs. The national coordinators also assist local PCC's in preparing their annual grant renewal applications.

There are eight highly relevant management decision-making centers for the PCC program in Washington: the PCC National Director; the Associate Director, Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs; Deputy Associate Director, Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs; Associate Director, Office of Administration (OCD); Budget and Accounting Officer, Office of Administration (OCD); Office of Grants and Contract Management (OCD); Legislative Liaison (OCD); and the Office of Research and Evaluation, Children's Bureau. Each of these centers of management decision-making responsibility has a significant interest in the operations and performance of the Parent and Child Center program.

History of PCC Reporting

As a part of its contract to document and analyze the early development of the PCC program, Kirschner Associates was requested to design and administer a reporting system for the PCC's. This now defunct system was known as "The National PCC Reporting System." Under this system, all central data collection , processing and analysis were handled by Kirschner. Each PCC was required to establish a half-time staff position, a data coordinator, who was to see that reports were submitted to Kirschner on a regular basis.

Kirschner developed, tested, and distributed reporting requirements and reporting forms for the PCC's. As a result of operational experience and requests for additional data by OCD, revisions were made in these reporting requirements.

The system provided for the quarterly and/or semi-annual reporting of data on participant characteristics, selected health data on children under three, financial data, and information about the goals, policies, facilities, and activities of the PCC's. Forms were also provided for reporting participant and staff terminations and information on medical contacts with children after initial examinations.

In April 1970, the medical contact and consent-for-release-of-information forms were discontinued. In June, 1970, the contract with Kirschner expired, and the responsibility for central data collection, processing, and analysis was shifted to the Evaluation Branch, Division of Research and Evaluation, Children's Bureau, OCD. In November, 1970, all reporting requirements under the "National PCC Reporting System" were suspended*, and plans were begun for developing a new, more satisfactory MIS.

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*OCD requested that family and staff intake and termination forms, volunteer information forms, and Health Status reports on focal children continue to be completed and filed at the PCC's.

Major Problems with the National PCC Reporting System

The major problems with the reporting system were:

- PCC's were not submitting timely and accurate reports.
- Some of the information collected was not apparently useful

It is essential to understand the reasons for these basic problems if similar problems are to be avoided in the future.

Kirschner listed a number of reasons for the failing in the reporting system. First, there was a natural resistance to "paperwork" at the PCC's, where human need is so apparent. Secondly, the PCC's were overburdened with reporting requirements from as many as six outside agencies. Because the Kirschner forms were the only ones not tied to the receipt of funds, they were understandably given lowest priority

The requirement that forms be submitted to Kirschner was not uniformly supported by OCD, and the PCC's were naturally very sensitive to what OCD thought was important.

Because the data being collected were to be used in the Kirschner research effort, they were particularly suspect and an easy target for urban militants.

There is a general suspicion of authority on the part of many poor people. Thus, many refused to provide any information on themselves which could conceivably jeopardize their welfare status.

The health status report, required by OCD over the objections of pediatric consultants to Kirschner, was not acceptable to most medical practitioners. Because it was not connected to the payment of a fee, it was rarely filled out.

Where untrained persons were employed as data coordinators, Kirschner reported that the information reporting was generally poor. Also, where directors attempted to handle this function themselves, they usually performed very poorly, because of competing demands on their time.

Finally, Kirschner noted that some directors were reluctant to submit information which they felt would reflect unfavorably on their performance.

We observed several additional reasons for poor system performance. First, PCC directors and staff were not involved in the design of the system, so they felt no personal commitment to ensure that it worked well. Second, data coordinators received no training in the collection of data and the filling out of forms. They had to depend on written instructions which were quite terse and incomplete. No adequate user's manual was provided.

Further, and more important, very little technical assistance was provided to PCC management staff in the effective use of the data collected. This only occurred fortuitously, if the Project Advisor chose to provide it. It is very difficult to elicit enthusiasm for collecting and processing data if these data are not demonstrably useful to the PCC's in the management of their own programs.

The Kirschner forms were not consistent with the forms required in the refunding proposal. Thus, aside from the apparent uselessness for PCC management, the preparation of these forms saved no time in the preparation of the refunding proposal. More importantly, they did not assist in that critical process.

Finally, and most importantly, the PCC's received very little feedback on the information they submitted. They had little understanding of why it was needed or how it was going to be used.

On balance, the Kirschner system was overly ambitious in its data demands and expensive to maintain.

Study Approach

Abt Associates, Inc. approached the development of recommendations for a new, more satisfactory MIS in a straight-forward manner. The PCC program was viewed as a system, with four levels of decision-making: PCC's, project advisors, grantee and delegate agencies, and OCD. At each level, essential needs for information, the kind and quality of information currently available, the current reporting requirements, and the resources currently or potentially available for operating an MIS were identified. The latter three tasks involved a documentation of what currently exists. In order to specify information needs, key management decisions were identified and analyzed. Then the information necessary for making those decisions, the form it should take, and the frequency with which it is needed were derived.

In addition to the above tasks, and as a consequence of the criteria established for the MIS, we analyzed the implications for the MIS of the extensive diversity in PCC's, analyzed and documented the major problems with the previous and current information systems, and explored the reasonable possibilities for future modifications in the current PCC program.

Finally, we took full advantage of our previous experience with management information systems involving communication between a federal office in Washington and programs located throughout the country, in an attempt to avoid the special problems raised by such an organization.

To collect the information for making these analyses, we conducted a number of interviews at all levels of the PCC program. OCD and Abt Associates agreed that it was absolutely essential to involve the ultimate users of the system in the design process. This involvement insures:

- That the recommended information is truly needed for decision-making.
- That the recommended procedures for processing information are appropriate.
- That those responsible for operating the system are convinced of its utility and are committed to seeing that it is successful.

Interviews were conducted with staff and participants at selected PCC's, representatives of grantee and delegate agencies, project advisors, and key personnel at OCD. Interview guides were developed to assist the interviewers in this task.

As specified by OCD, a sample of seven PCC's was selected to represent the population of PCC's, in terms of key indicators of program variability. It was agreed that other PCC's would, during Phase II, be involved in the design of the MIS before it is adopted for program-wide use.

In addition to the information derived from interviews, we collected virtually all of the forms used by the PCC's for external reporting and internal record-keeping. We also obtained copies of the recent refunding proposal for each PCC we visited, a copy of the revised refunding package developed by OCD for use beginning in January, 1972, and key documents describing the PCC program which are available at OCD.

Based on our analyses, the recommendations for system design and implementation were developed. In every case, preliminary recommendations, based on all information determined to be useful, were established. These recommendations were then checked against the criteria for the MIS, our findings concerning current reporting requirements, resource availability, diversity in the PCC's, problems with the previous and current information system, the possibilities for future modification in the PCC program, and our own previous experience with similar management information systems.

Revisions (mainly simplifications) were made in the preliminary design, and the revised design was presented to the OCD Project Officer for comment. Then, further revisions were made.

CHAPTER 3

GUIDELINES FOR A WORKABLE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR PARENT AND CHILD CENTERS

The now defunct "National PCC Reporting System" proved to be infeasible because it was complex, overly ambitious in its data demands, expensive, unresponsive to the operating needs of local PCC's, slow, and independent of grant decisions. Under the "National PCC Reporting System" useful information flowed only one way--toward Washington. By and large, the system--even in the information gathering stage-- told the local management of Parent and Child Centers virtually nothing they needed to know and did not already know. Furthermore, it did not build a data base that could be used for deeper analysis of program characteristics or impact, nor did it generate all of the basic information vital to sound management decision-making in Washington.

In order to be useful, the management information system for Parent and Child Centers must remedy these shortcomings. It must:

- concentrate on gathering only information of the highest priority
- report information in a uniform, timely manner that does not overload the system
- be designed for rapid data validation and information turn-around
- produce useful information flow in two directions; toward local Parent and Child Centers as well as toward Washington
- be directly associated with funding and contract compliance evaluation cycles

- standardize currently informal, often erratic communication patterns
- be capable of implementation with the resources currently available.

To the extent that these requirements are incompatible or cannot be met with the resources currently or potentially available, the system will be unworkable. This chapter explores the requirements for a useful PCC management information system and the compatibility of those requirements.

Concentrate on gathering only information of highest priority. -- Management information needs are insatiable. Almost any reliable information about the objectives, organization, financing, clientele, and operations of a program is useful to management decision-making. Likewise, information about alternative uses for funds, strategies for program development and operation, and competing or complementary programs can be justified as necessary.

However, some types of information are of higher priority than others. Information about the program's financial status, compliance with relevant regulations (including data on participant and staff characteristics to show program eligibility), service to participants, orientation, and staff utilization--is consistently considered to be of high value by Parent and Child Center program decision makers.

A number of circumstances influences the relative value of these five types of information to different people. The conditions within which the program is operated, the external pressures being exerted on the program, and the responsibilities of the specific decision makers involved interact to affect the management information priorities held. Furthermore, the same people operating under different conditions will rank their information needs differently.

What is significant, however, is that these five types of information, when appropriately linked and utilized, can form the basis for maximum effective management.

Parent and Child Center directors, grantees, and OCD alike need to know how much money is being spent. A center director must know if his center is paying its bills and can continue to do so. The grantee must be certain that the rate of expenditures does not exceed the flow of income at any time during the grant period. OCD must know if its funds are being spent appropriately.

Without reliable, explicit, and timely reports on the fiscal affairs of all of the individual Parent and Child Centers, none of these needs can be met.

Information regarding contract compliance is also of great value to PCC program management decision makers. It generally provides basic insight into whether or not the intended consequences of the program are being achieved. In addition, legal responsibility and often legal mandate bind decision makers to monitoring several types of functions and activities. For example, funds are typically ear-marked for specific uses. All other uses of those funds, without special variance, are prohibited. Several other legal mandates which require monitoring include:

- the restriction of service provision to eligible recipients who are typically poor, socially disadvantaged or otherwise handicapped
- the PCC program requirement that 20 percent of all program support come from non-federal contributions; often these contributions are made in the form of volunteered services and donated goods
- the validation of donated goods and volunteered services that are used as a portion of the non-federal contribution

- equal employment hiring regulations to ensure fair employment opportunities for women and members of minority groups
- the participation of citizens in policy making for the operation of local programs directly affecting them.

Information to show contract compliance often overlaps with the need for information about a program's service to its participants. Continued operation of any program that does not receive financial support directly from its participants is almost certain to be jeopardized if that operation does not have information to justify its continuation. The most convincing evidence to support the continued operation of a program is a record of responsible, pertinent service to people. Records of this kind are invaluable in gaining and retaining program support.

Information about a program's objectives, its clientele, and its emphasis, and information about service to program participants provide management an excellent picture of a program's orientation. Responsible management must know the orientation of its program measured by objective indicators. It must then compare that orientation with the program's objectives. Only in this way can management determine whether current practice is achieving program objectives. Indicators of program orientation, such as the differentiated resources being employed to gain each objective, are useful management tools, and hence of high priority.

Finally, information about staff utilization is not only an adjunct to management decisions regarding program orientation, it is necessary to optimization of the resources available to management.

Report information in a uniform, timely manner that does not overload the system. -- To be useful, information must be capable of aggregation and available at the proper time. Unless information about individual PCC's can be aggregated, it has limited value in making decisions about the entire PCC program. If data are not available when they are needed, they cannot be used for decision-making. Both of these propositions would appear to be self-evident.

What may not be so self-evident, however, is that uniform, timely information is difficult to generate. Even modest requests for information impose heavy burdens upon an information reporting system. Every new piece of information that is requested must be defined specifically so as to reduce ambiguity that will introduce distortion and/or breakdowns in the system. Definitions must be agreed upon and distributed to the data coordinator at local PCC's. The data coordinators in turn must demonstrate understanding of those definitions. In most cases the record-keeping system of the local PCC must be changed and new data must be gathered on each of the staff, participants, client contacts, etc., for which data are being requested. Thus, the request for a single piece of information requires an entire chain of events. The system will break down if any link in the chain malfunctions.

A variety of factors may contribute to this malfunctioning. For example, program personnel often operate within an informal, verbal system where neither management information nor management decisions are recorded. By contrast, an MIS requires formal, recorded information and decisions. Hence, the entire decision-making process in a Parent and Child Center is likely to be at odds with an MIS, if technical assistance is not provided and if key management decisions are not formalized.

Failure to concentrate responsibility for data collection and reporting can also cause an MIS to malfunction, as will a lack of resources for data gathering and reporting. Sickness, staff turnover, and changes in procedures will also contribute to a system's breakdown.

The volume of data to be reported, verified, and transformed into useable form, however, is the most crucial variable. If the request for information is cyclical, the volume of data to be processed is multiplied. The more frequent the information gathering cycle, the greater the prospects for a breakdown.

Overly ambitious data demands either in the initial MIS design or unchecked, incremental growth of the system will also overload the system.

In short, the simpler the system, the less frequently it cycles new information, and the more it is dependent on information already being gathered, the better it will function. Yet, the system must produce uniform, timely information if it is to be effective.

Rapid Validation and Information Turnaround. -- Errors in data reporting are inevitable. Errors may also be introduced by differences in definition, multiple coding schemes, and contradictory reporting requirements. Job titles are likely to differ from site to site. Unless they are standardized, they will produce problems of data validity. Some definitional problems, however, may not be as easily standardized. Many Puerto Ricans, for example, are likely to be classified as "black" in the South and "Orientals" are likely to be classified differently in DesMoines than in Hawaii, regardless of written definitions.

A more immediately salient problem is that of multiple coding schemes. Two examples from other programs may suffice. In a large manpower program each site has at one time used not less than three site identification numbers (all three-digit numerical codes). Another national data bank has the following instruction for county identification: "If you have a state developed county code number enter it on line-- otherwise use the bureau of census code." To the extent that such multiple schemes eventuate in non-legitimate entries they can be noted and corrected. However, in many cases coding schemes will overlap and serious mistakes ensue. The normal assumption is that those submitting information will carefully attend to instruction sheets -- this has rarely been found true.

Often in an attempt to overcome the above problem, plain English is used rather than coding. If a computer-based system is used, disaster may ensue. Consider the problem of New York City. In one national data base over 200 variants were found: NYC, N.Y.C., N.Y., NY, Brooklyn, Brkln, Manhattan, New York, etc. Variants in spelling, and in spaces between words, abound.

Most of these errors must be corrected through the system's design or through technical assistance. However, carelessness is likely to be the most common cause of error. Carelessness is most likely to occur in an impersonal reporting network. It is least likely to occur when the person recording information has a tangible, vested interest in making certain that the information reported is correct.

A good information system, therefore, must anticipate error and attempt to reduce it. It can do this by building incentives for accurate data reporting into the system, and by validating the accuracy of the data that are reported. In the case of a management information system for Parent and Child Centers, the system should concentrate responsibility for reporting data and direct positive motivation toward those responsible for reporting data.

We recommend two significant types of positive motivation: (1) involve PCC management and data coordinators in the system design and implementation so that they will feel a personal stake in its proper functioning, (2) design the system in a way that produces a two-way flow of useful information, thereby making the system and data coordinator a vital link in making key management decisions.

Produce useful information flow in two directions. -- Much of the information that is gathered to assure the U.S. Office of Child Development of a local PCC's fiscal solvency, compliance with contract provisions, and program performance is irrelevant to the management of a local PCC program. Most Parent and Child Centers are small enough that their management decision makers already know implicitly almost everything they are asked to gather data on and report. Hence, they tend to view request for such information as burdens or onerous chores that drain scarce resources away from program operations and they regard all information systems as evaluative and monitoring devices. Moreover, they resent the one-way flow of useful information, and often neglect to submit to such requests unless "corrective sanctions" are applied against them.

A workable management information system must overcome these natural prejudices. If it is to be more than a monitoring device designed solely for the benefit of decision makers in Washington, it must function for the benefit of both local decision makers and Washington decision makers by producing a two-way flow of useful information.

Direct association with funding and contractual decisions. -- If a management information system is to be in fact what the name implies, it must be used in making management decisions. The most critical test of this requisite is its use in making basic decisions, such as the decision to refund and the decisions to make or withhold quarterly payments to funded programs. If a management information system is going to be used in conjunction with them, its information requests should be directly linked with and timed to accommodate such decisions. If it is not going to be used for these purposes, a program monitoring system, rather than a management information system should be adopted.

Standardize some currently informal erratic communication patterns. -- All of the Parent and Child Centers visited as part of this study depend primarily upon informal, verbal communication for most basic management information. Management decision-making in these PCC's is sound only to the extent that these communication patterns are dependable. To the extent that they are interrupted by lapses of memory, changes of personnel, and internal organizational competition or conflict, local PCC management decision-making is erratic.

The adoption of a management information system must be accompanied on the local level by the standardization of current communication systems. Without this stipulation, the MIS will have little impact on local PCC management decision-making.

Be capable of implementation with the resources currently or potentially available. -- Obviously, a major constraint in designing a management information system is the quantity and quality of resources available for implementation. Reassignment of staff, the design and production of information gathering forms, key punching, computer programming, computer processing, data gathering, and distribution of processed data are all costly.

Unlike several specific elements of an MIS, a management information system taken as a whole has a high threshold. In other words, basic ingredients of the system cannot be implemented incrementally. In order to start the system, a relatively high set of costs will be incurred. If those costs are not incurred, the system cannot function. Moreover, it is usually very costly to add on to an operating MIS, since the addition of a single new requirement requires a series of adjustments in the system.

In sum, the design for a workable management information system cannot exceed the resources available, but it must achieve a relatively high threshold and it should be capable of accommodating high priority management information needs. Once an MIS is adopted, great caution should be exercised before changing the data reporting formats.

To what extent are PCC management information system requirements incompatible? -- Most of the system requirements outlined above are clearly compatible. Yet, two critical system requirements--(1) the amount of high priority information required, and (2) the necessity for the two-way flow of useful information would appear to have a high propensity for overloading the system. It is important to recognize that these specifications are, at least to some extent, incompatible with the low tolerance of an MIS for handling large volumes of information. Therefore, everything possible should be done in the design of the system to reduce the possibility of the system malfunctioning caused by overloading the system.

CHAPTER 4

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM DESIGN

A useful management information system must be designed to provide vital, timely information relevant to key management decisions. The most important OCD management decisions regarding the Parent and Child Center program are the decisions involving grants for the support of local centers and financial payments that denote compliance with grant specifications.

Currently neither of these sets of decisions is made in a coordinated, systematic manner for Parent and Child Centers as a group. On the contrary, decisions regarding annual grants and grant renewals are made at different times for different centers. HEW/OCD payments on grants are also made on individualized payment schedules. Furthermore, neither set of decisions is directly associated with the flow of managment information.

We recommend that grants, grant renewals and payment schedules be standardized to a quarterly base for all PCC's and that the flow of management information be geared to furnish timely data relevant to these key management decisions.

A workable management information system depends heavily on this decision. The association of information gathering and reporting with the grant mechanism gives the MIS the leverage needed to ensure prompt, complete compliance with the information reporting requirements necessary to maintaining an operating system. Without this leverage, the prospects for a system's breakdown increase considerably. Data gathering expenses are also likely to be increased by the inability to aggregate data from several otherwise accessible sources of reliable information, because they reflect experience for different time spans. Finally, if uniform funding cycles are not adopted, it is likely that the system will function primarily as a program monitoring device devoid of value for management decision-making.

There are several advantages associated with linking MIS data reporting to grant decision-making. Kirschner Associates, Inc., reported that one of the greatest difficulties they experienced in trying to implement their "National PCC Reporting System" was their inability to require the submission of data as a prerequisite to funding. Lags in data reporting created a host of problems that were intimately involved with the failure of their system.

Of more significance, however, is the fact that a well functioning management information system is itself a management tool, since the very process of data reporting helps to establish management priorities.* Hence, linking the flow of management information to management decisions is an important management tool that should not be cast aside lightly.

A decision to link the MIS to PCC program decision-making related to PCC grant approval and grant payments will help to settle three basic system design questions: (1) Whom will the system serve? (2) How will it serve them?, and (3) How will its operating integrity be insured? If the MIS is linked to the funding cycle, it will serve local PCC directors and the HEW/OCD management personnel responsible for making management decisions involving the operations of the PCC program. It will serve them by providing high priority information that is relevant to the decisions they must make, and the system's operating integrity will be insured because the flow of information will be mutually advantageous to PCC directors and the OCD management personnel responsible for making PCC program decisions.

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* See Peter Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 35.

Once these basic system design questions are settled, the system designer can address these additional questions:

- What information should be reported?
- Where will this information be gathered?
- Who will collect the information and how will it be gathered?
- How often should data be gathered and reported?
- Where should the data be reported, by whom and to whom?
- How should the processed data be used?

Each of these questions must be answered in very specific terms before the system can be implemented.

What Information Should Be Reported?

The analysis of key decisions (discussed in the Appendix, Chapter 6) indicated that data on (1) financial status, (2) contract compliance, (3) service to program participants, (4) program orientation, and (5) staff utilization are of highest priority to PCC management decision makers. Careful consideration has been given to the range of the exact items of information within each category that would be of the most value to management decision makers. The items shown on the attached forms reflect that consideration.

The request for each of those items of information can be individually justified, but to do so while explaining why other items of information are not being requested would require a supplementary volume. Let it suffice to say that the requests for information were kept as closely related to current reporting requirements as possible so as to avoid unnecessary change-over costs, and every effort was made to keep the volume of data to be reported at a minimum, so as to reduce the prospects of system breakdown.

Some useful information, such as the attitude of staff toward participants, was not requested because it cannot be gathered without an extra-special effort. Some vital information, such as HEW region, Congressional District and State, was not requested because this information can be easily ascertained from Washington and can be pre-loaded into the system by means of data processing instructions.

Where Will This Information Be Gathered?

The grant application, in-take forms, records of service to participants, staff time sheets, and reports on expenditures are the most likely sources for collecting high priority information. At the present time, annual applications must be submitted to request grant support for Parent and Child Center operations. There has been some discussion about extending grant periods from the current practice of one year cycles to three year cycles. There has also been an effort to revise the forms which provide the foundation for annual grant submissions, starting in 1972.

Both of these efforts appear to be positive, as it was a common complaint among the PCC directors who were interviewed as part of this study that (a) the short grant period severely limited their ability to plan their program, and (b) the guidelines for grant application and renewal are unclear.

The content requested in proposed revised forms OS 185 through 198 was analyzed and possible additions and deletions were considered. By and large, the new forms for PCC grant application were found to be comprehensive. They ask local PCC's to identify their goals and to recommend criteria for measuring progress toward the achievement of those goals. They request information on anticipated operating facilities, personnel procedures, financial reporting and bookkeeping systems, program structure and participants. They require a plan for recruiting participants and for PCC interaction with the community. They ask for information on anticipated sources of non-federal funding, the ethnic composition of staff, and proposed staff salaries. In composite, this information provides a useful framework for management decision-making.

The only substantive change recommended by Abt Associates, Inc. is that the proposed operating budget and the "Grantee Quarterly Financial Report" be requested to have detail that matches that requested on recommended Form VIII of this study. Otherwise, all of the proposed forms were found to be necessary and capable of being submitted. Most of the local Parent and Child Centers visited as a part of this study, however, are not currently geared to collecting some of the information requested on the proposed forms.

While the proposed revised annual grant application and renewal forms will be a welcome new source of basic information for the Office of Child Development in Washington, they will be a burden to the management of local Parent and Child Centers if they arenot supported by a data collection system that interfaces with the annual grant application request for information. One of the common complaints made by local PCC directors against the now defunct "National PCC Reporting System" was that it did not assist them in filling the information requests required on the annual grant application. This will not be the case, however, if the system outlined herein is implemented and if proposed revised forms OS 185 through 198 are adopted.

The true foundation for an information system must be laid by the adopting of good, uniform in-take forms of program staff and participants, staff time sheets, accounting records and records of service. Recommendations for uniform records in each of these areas are offered in Forms I, III, V, VIII and IX.

Who Will Collect the Information and How Will It Be Gathered?

The first prerequisite to systematic information collection is to establish clear responsibilities for data acquisition. Abt Associates, Inc. recommends that this responsibility be lodged with a national data coordinator responsible to the director of the Parent and Child Center program in the Office of Child Development in Washington. It is further recommended that data collection and reporting on the local level be manual, and that it be computerized on the national level.

In-take data should be collected from every employee and participant family at the time of entry into the program, and should be updated annually. If this information has not been collected on employees and participants already in the program, it should be gathered at the time the MIS is adopted and updated annually thereafter.

Most Parent and Child Centers also require records of program service to participant families. Like staff time sheets, these records must be standardized for all PCC's, and if possible, simplified and consolidated.

Abt Associates, Inc. recommends that if it is at all possible, the submission of staff time sheets and the recording of program services to participant families be done in conjunction with a weekly PCC staff meeting. This procedure will put the responsibility for submitting this information into a routine, and if the weekly staff meeting is used to discuss participating families, the routine will reduce paperwork by eliminating duplication of records on participants.

Some records, such as fiscal records, are currently being maintained by the grantee. All too often, the director of a Parent and Child Center is hampered by lack of easy access to this information. Moreover, it is usually not in a useful form. It would be helpful to all concerned if an expenditures-to-date statement on Form VIII* was available to the director of a Parent and Child Center by the middle of each month and to OCD in Washington on a quarterly basis.

How Often Should Data Be Gathered and Reported?

At the level of the individual Parent and Child Center, some information must be gathered--as the occasion arises--from day to day and certainly on a weekly basis. Washington, however, can survive with timely, accurate information acquired quarterly. Hence, Abt Associates, Inc. recommends that staff and participant in take information be gathered at the time of in take, termination and reinstatement--which will be irregularly. It recommends that records of services to participants and staff time sheets be gathered on a weekly basis, and the accounting records be kept as current as feasible.

The data on all of these records should be stored at the Parent and Child Center** and should be reported on a quarterly basis, no later than eight days into the new quarter.

Where Should the Data Be Reported, By Whom and To Whom?

Quarterly reports from local Parent and Child Centers should be sent to a data coordinator attached to the director of the Parent and Child Center program in Washington. The reports should be prepared by the local data coordinator but both the center director and the grantee should sign off on them. The center director should also prepare a narrative report to accompany the quantitative reports. Where necessary, this narrative should clarify the meaning of the quantitative data reported. It should discuss special problems, innovative steps taken and individual success stories, when appropriate.

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* These data are similar to the data reported on CAP 15.

** The only exception might be accounting records which would be maintained by the grantee and reported to the director of the PCC monthly.

If possible, the appropriate officials at the OCD Office of Grants and Contract Management, the OCD Budget Office and national coordinators should receive copies of pertinent reports from the data coordinator in Washington before the data are validated, key punched and processed. This procedure will reduce confusion and speed data processing without impeding the activities of Office of Child Development personnel who are dependent on copies of those records.

Given the limited size of the PCC program, it might be feasible to send copies of individual in-take records, staff time sheets and family service records to a national data coordinator instead of submitting quarterly summary reports based on those records. Abt Associates, Inc. does not recommend this. The major reasons for this decision are: the ease with which these records can be processed manually; the fact that individual centers are relatively small and are likely to remain so because of state licensing requirements, the type of clientele served, and the need to locate services nearby infants' homes; and the propensity for systems that handle large volumes of data from disparate sources to break down.

How Should the Processed Data Be Used?

Once validated, key punched, and processed, the quarterly data should be made available promptly to the management decision makers who have need for it. Some of the processed data, such as functional analysis of expenditures at each Parent and Child

Center*, will be entirely new information and should be of great interest to Washington and local PCC decision makers alike. It is particularly important that this data be sent out to local Parent and Child Centers promptly. A fast turn around of data and the two way flow of timely, useful information will do more than anything else to establish the usefulness of the MIS.

After the initial run of data is made available to the system's primary users, including University affiliates, grantees, delegate agencies and project advisors, necessary corrections resulting from feed-back should be made and the data should become the basis of a quarterly newsletter to PCC, MIS users and other interested parties as designated by the Secretary of HEW, the director of the Office of Child Development, and the Director of the Parent and Child Center program. This newsletter might well include "vignettes" or case histories of success stories taken from Parent and Child Center directors' quarterly narrative reports. It might also focus on innovations, problems, little known resources available to PCC's and recent literature of special interest to PCC's. The newsletter can be an important resource for eliminating unnecessary trial and error learning. It can also help facilitate the maximum use of good management information, as it becomes available.

The Major Advantages of the Proposed MIS

The most important single advantage of the MIS proposed in this study is that it simplifies and reduces the information gathering and reporting requirements for local Parent and Child Centers. All necessary records, other than research data, can be maintained on five forms: (1) Participant In-take Form,

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* It is particularly important that these data be processed by Washington, as machine processing will take only minutes, while manual processing will take approximately two man-days per center. Moreover, most of the centers visited as a part of this study were not equipped to do such analysis--only one of the PCC's visited had a calculator.

(2) Staff In-take Form, (3) Family Services Form, (4) Staff Utilization Form, and (5) Fiscal Expenditure Form.* These forms are never made out more frequently than once per week, and they are directly linked with quarterly and annual reporting requirements. In many cases this will reduce record keeping requirements by 80%. Furthermore, the proposed forms yield a great deal of information that cannot be obtained from the data collection forms used heretofore. The proposed data base will appreciably improve the prospects for special studies, as well as on-going data collection. Finally, the information on the Abt forms permit a computerized analysis of operating costs by function of service. The techniques for such an analysis have already been field tested and can easily be duplicated. Consequently, once the proposed MIS is operationalized and data are made machine readable, a functional cost analysis can be made of each center in a few minutes.

The possibility of making an analysis of operating costs for each Parent and Child Center on a quarterly basis is a major accomplishment in its own right. When available, this kind of information will facilitate optimal utilization of program resources and enhance the prospect of providing the services the program was designed to deliver.

The proposed MIS also standardizes and centralizes data collection. Uniform job definitions, funding cycles and terminology will have a positive impact on the quality of the information reported on the PCC program. Finally, the very process of reporting program information about focal objectives will re-enforce those objectives, both at the local and national levels.

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* This does not mean to imply that the normal bookkeeping ledgers and support records kept by the grantee can be eliminated, nor does it imply that vouchers for volunteer services used as a part of the non-federal contribution to the program's operation can be eliminated. An MIS cannot displace government audit of its funds.

Illustration III.

PCC MIS DATA BASE

	Data Source	Frequency of Collection	Data Storage Responsibility		Use of Data	Reporting Frequency
			PCC	Washington		
1.	Participants Intake	irregular, at the time of intake and termination	x		characteristics of participants (contract compliance)	quarterly
2.	Staff Intake	irregular, at the time of intake and termination	x		characteristics of staff (contract compliance)	quarterly
3.	Staff Contacts With Participants	weekly, by PCC data coordinator at weekly staff meeting	x		(a) program performance report on social and economic services	quarterly
					(b) program performance report on health services	quarterly
4.	Staff Utilization Report	weekly	x		analysis of staff utilization	quarterly
5.	Accounting Books	quarterly	x		(a) expenditures to date (fiscal management and compliance)	quarterly
					(b) expenditures by functional service	(derived from the two previous reports)
6.	Director	quarterly	x		draw to Washington's attention by means of a narrative report from the director of the center's performance, opportunities, and problems	quarterly
7.	Special Update of Participant and Staff Intake Data	annually	x		input into grant renewal	(not to a special report)
8.	All of Above	annually	x		grant renewal application	annually

Form I

PARTICIPANT IN-TAKE FORM

PCC_______________ Location_______________ Date_______________

Name of Family_______________

Name Head of Household_______________

____

Sex Head of Household_______________

Date of Birth Head of Household_______________

____

Name Spouse (if in household)_______________

____

Date of Birth (spouse)_______________

Highest Grade Completed by Spouse_____

____

Is there a Focal (Pregnant) Woman?

_____yes _____no

Name of Child # 1_______________

Date of Birth_______________

Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes_____no

Handicaps_______________

Name of Child # 2_______________

Date of Birth_______________

Sex_____Focal Child:_____yes _____no

Handicaps_______________

Language in Home*_______________

Home Status*_______________

No. of Rooms in Home_______________

No. of Rooms Used in Sleeping_______________

Distance from PCC_______________

Family Status*_______________

Family Income_______________

Primary Source of Income*_______________

____

Total Number of Members in Household_______________

Name of Child # 3_______________

Date of Birth_______________

Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes _____no

Handicaps_______________

Name of Child # 4_______________

Date of Birth_______________

Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes _____no

Handicaps_______________

Form I (Cont'd)

Name of Child # 5____________________
Date of Birth____________________
Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes_____no
Handicaps____________________

Name of Child # 6____________________
Date of Birth____________________
Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes_____no
Handicaps____________________

Ethnicity:
(1) Mexican-American
(2) Puerto Rican
(3) Other Caucasian
(4) Black
(5) American Indian
(6) Eskimo
(7) Polynesian
(8) Oriental
(9) Other

Name of Child # 7____________________
Date of Birth____________________
Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes _____no
Handicaps____________________

Other Children:____________________
Date of Birth____________________
Sex_____ Focal Child:_____yes _____no
Handicaps____________________

Date of In-Take____________________
Date of Termination____________________
Reason for Termination*____________________
____

Date of Reinstatement____________________
Date of Termination____________________

Participation in Other Federally
Sponsored Programs*____________________
____

This form is used exclusively by the PCC. It is to be pre-coded. It is summarized quarterly onto Form II. It is updated annually.

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* An appropriate selection of fixed responses will be identified as a part of the design of detailed system definitions.

Form II

QUARTERLY REPORT ON PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

PCC__________ Location__________ Date__________

Total Number of Families Enrolled at the End of the Quarter __________

Total Number of Families Servied During the Quarter __________

Total Number of New Families Added to Service Base During the Quarter __________

Total Number of Families Reinstated During the Quarter __________

Total Number of Families Terminated During the Quarter __________

Average Length of Participation in Program__________

Reasons for Termination*__________

Total Number of Families with Family Incomes Below the Poverty Level __________

Total Number of Families Receiving AFDC or General Assistance __________

Total Number of Families with Female Head of Household __________

Total Number of Households with 2-3 Members __________

4-5 Members __________

6-7 Members __________

8 or More Members __________

Total Number of Households with One or More Handicapped Family Members __________

Total Number of Families Using a Household Language Other Than English __________

Participants by Ethnicity:

	Families	Total Participants
(1) Mexican-American		
(2) Puerto Rican		
(3) Other Caucasian		
(4) Black		
(5) American Indian		
(6) Eskimo		
(7) Polynesian		

Form II (Cont'd)

	Families	Total Participants
(8) Oriental	____________	____________
(9) Other	____________	____________

The Total Number of Participating Children Aged 0-2__________

3-5__________

6+ __________

A copy of this form is sent to Washington.

* An appropriate selection of fixed responses will be identified as a part of the design of detailed system definitions.

Form III

STAFF IN-TAKE FORM

PCC__________ Location__________ Date__________

Employee Name__________

Date of Birth__________

Employees Address__________

____

Highest Grade Completed______

Job Title__________

____

Employment Status:

(a) Full-time______

(b) Part-time______

Neighborhood Resident:

yes______ no______

Ethnicity:

(1) Mexican-American
(2) Puerto Rican
(3) Other Caucasian
(4) Black
(5) American Indian
(6) Eskimo
(7) Polynesian
(8) Oriental
(9) Other

Average No. of Hours Per Week__________

Annual Earnings__________

Hourly Wage__________

Employer Costs of FICA and Payroll Taxes__________

Is Your Family a Participant in the PCC Program______

Sex______

Date of Employment__________

Date of Termination__________

Reason for Termination______

____

Date of Reinstatement__________

____

Date of Termination__________

> This form is used exclusively by the PCC. It is summarized quarterly onto Form IV. It is updated annually.

Form IV

QUARTERLY REPORT ON STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

PCC__________________ Location______________ Date_______

Total Number of Employees at the End of the Quarter ______

Total Number of Professional Employees ______

Total Number of Non-Professional Employees ______

Total Number of Different Volunteers Donating Professional Services ______

Total Number of Different Volunteers Donating Non-Professional Services ______

Total Number of PCC Staff That Are Members of Families That Have Been or Are Currently Participants in the PCC Program ______

Total Number of Employees Employed During the Quarter ______

Total Number of Employees Terminated During the Quarter ______

Average Length of Employment___________

Reason for Employee Terminations*____________

Total Number of Employees Reinstated During the Quarter ______

Total Number of Male Employees ______

Total Number of Female Employees ______

Total Number of Employees by Ethnicity:

(1) Mexican American ______
(2) Puerto Rican ______
(3) Other Caucasian ______
(4) Black ______
(5) American Indian ______
(6) Eskimo ______
(7) Polynesian ______
(8) Oriental ______
(9) Other ______

A copy of this form is sent to Washington

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* An appropriate selection of fixed responses will be identified as a part of detailed system definitions.

This form is used exclusively by the PCC. One is made out each week for each family in the program. It is summarized quearterly onto forms VI and VII. The numbered services at the bottom of the page match the services listed on forms VI and VII.

Form V

FAMILY SERVICE REPORT -- WEEKLY

PCC________ Location________ Date________ Family________

1. Family Services	Check if Appropriate	# of Days
Transportation	____	____
Baby-sitting	____	____
Family Counseling	____	____
Family Assistance	____	____
Home Repairs	____	____
Homemaker Service	____	____
Housing Assistance	____	____
In-kind Assistance	____	____
Orientation to Community Resource	____	____

2. **PCC Policy Involvement**

PAC Member: yes____ no____

Attended PAC Meeting: yes____ no____

3. **Referrals**

Social, Economic Referral	____
Health Referral	____
Dental Referral	____
Employment Referral	____

Family Member (name)	Relation-ship to PCC	# of Days at PCC	# of Times Visited at Home by PCC Staff	# of Times Given Hot Lunch	Tutoring Service	Head Start or Day Care	(Check if Appropriate) Parent Education and Training											(Check if Appropriate) Health Services												Innoculations						
							#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
#1																																				
#2																																				
#3																																				
#4																																				
#5																																				
#6																																				
#7																																				
#8																																				
#9																																				
#10																																				

Form VI

QUARTERLY REPORT ON SERVICES TO PARTICIPANTS

PCC________________ Location______________ Date_________

I. Child Care and Development

Total Enrollment, Focal Children ______
Total # of Days Center Operated During Quarter ______
Total # of Days Child Care Provided ______
Average Daily Enrollment ______
Number of Child Hours of Care Provided ______
Total Number of Outreach Homes ______

II. Service to Families

	# of Different Families	# of Times Service Provided
Referrals, Social and Economic Services		
Referrals, Health		
Baby Sitting		
Family Counseling		
Financial Assistance		
Home Repairs		
Homemaker Service		
Housing Assistance		
In-kind Assistance (Food, Clothing, etc.)		
Job Placement and Employment Counseling		
Orientation to Community Resources		
Transportation		

A copy of this report is sent to Washington

Form VII

QUARTERLY PARTICIPANT HEALTH REPORT

PCC______________ Location_____________ Date__________

	Focal Children	Focal Mothers	Siblings	Parents
1. Health Referrals				
2. Dental Referrals				
3. Physical Check-ups				
4. Dental Examinations				
5. Psychiatric Examinations				
6. Speech Check				
7. Hearing Check				
8. Vision Check				
9. Urinanalysis				
10. Orthopedic Check				
11. Therapy				
12. Emergency Health Services				
Innoculations*				
[a] DPT (last of set)				
[b] Polio (last of set)				
[c] Rubella				
[d] Measles				
[e] Mumps				
[f] Other				

* Smallpox eliminated because of announcement of Surgeon General

A copy of this report is sent to Washington.

Form VIII

QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF EXPENSES

(MONTHLY STATEMENT OF EXPENSES)

For the Period Starting__________and Ending __________

		Annual Budget	Annual Anticipated In-Kind*	Expen-ditures this Period	Expen-ditures to Date	In-Kind This Period	In-Kind to Date*
Personnel							
1.10	Salaries and Wages						
1.11	FICA and Other Payroll Taxes Paid by Employer						
1.2	Fringe Benefits Paid by Employer						
1.3	Consultant and Contract Fees						
1.311	Accounting						
1.312	Bonding Insurance						
1.313	Child Development Consultant						
1.314	Chauffers and Bus Drivers						
1.315	Housekeeping, Maintenance, and/or Repairs						
1.316	Legal Services						
1.317	Medical/Dental Therapy Services						
1.318	PAC Member Expenses, Other Than Travel						
1.319	Public Relations						
1.320	Research, Evaluation, Planning						
1.321	Other						

Form VIII (Cont'd)

		Annual Budget	Annual Anticipated In-Kind*	Expen-ditures This Period	Expen-ditures to Date	In-Kind This Period	In-Kind to Date*
Non-Personnel							
2.1	Travel	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.11	Local Travel by Staff	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.12	Out-of-area Travel by Staff	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.13	Local Travel by Participants	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.14	Out-of-area Travel by Participants	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.2	Space Cost and Rental	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.21	Rent	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.22	Utilities	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.23	Licenses and Permits, Other Than Motor Vehicles	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.3	Consumable Supplies	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.31	Educational Supplies	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.32	Food (Center)	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.33	Food (Use by Participants Outside Center)	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.34	Health Supplies	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.35	Household Supplies	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.36	Office Supplies	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.37	Printing, Advertising	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.38	Printing, Other	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.39	Communications	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.391	Telephone and Telegraph	______	______	______	______	______	______
2.392	Mailing and Shipping	______	______	______	______	______	______

Form VIII (Cont'd)

		Annual Budget	Annual Anticipated In-Kind*	Expenditures This Period	Expenditures to Date	In-Kind This Period	In-Kind to Date*
2.4	Rental, Lease, Purchase of Equipment						
2.41	Educational Equipment, Infant and Child						
2.42	Educational Equipment, Adult						
2.43	Health Equipment						
2.44	Maintenance Equipment						
2.45	Office Equipment						
2.46	Vehicles						
2.5	Other Costs						

A copy of this report is sent to the PCC director by the grantee monthly. A copy of the quarterly statement is sent to Washington.

* The Audits Currently Used, Will Be Used for Quality Control

Form IX

QUARTERLY STAFF UTILIZATION REPORT
(WEEKLY STAFF UTILIZATION REPORT)

For the Period Starting__________and Ending__________

1. PCC________________ Location___________ Date__________
2. Employees Name (Initials and Birthday)______________________________
3. Job Title______________________________
4. Actual Wages Paid____________________
5. Employer Contribution to FICA, Payroll Taxes______________________________
6. Employer Paid Fringe Benefits______________________________
7. Actual Hours Employed______________

Hours by Function

8. Administration, Management and Supervision of Personnel ________
9. Administration, Program Planning and Research ________
10. Administration, Fund-raising ________
11. Child Supervision and Education ________
12. Parent Education and Training ________
13. Social and Economic Services to Families ________
14. In-take, Evaluation and Referral ________
15. Health Services ________
16. Food Services ________
17. Community Organization ________
18. Transportation ________
19. (Pure) Research ________
20. Occupancy ________
21. Staff Development and On-the-job Training ________

> A copy of this report is made out weekly by each PCC staff member. At the end of each quarter the local data coordinator sends a quarterly statement to Washington on each local staff member and volunteer.

DEFINITIONS FOR FORM IX

8, 9, 10. Administration

The management and supervision of personnel, program planning and research, and fund-raising constitute the three basic activities of this function. These activities include advertising, public relations, communications, office operations, bookkeeping, printing, licensing and taxes, as well as administrative, management, and clerical activities.

20. Occupancy

All costs arising from the housing or occupation of lands, buildings, and offices for the operation of a Parent and Child Center. These costs include the ownership, lease or rent of lands, buildings, or office space; utilities, maintenance, and housekeeping supplies.

11. Supervision and Education

All activities related to the supervision, stimulation, and enrichment of infants, toddlers, and other young children involved as target populations of the center. The supervisory and educational activities of infant education, teachers, assistant teachers and aides constitute basic ingredients of this function. Educational supplies and materials, including playground equipment are also to be considered to be in this category.

16. Food Service

All activities, services, and supplies associated with meal planning, food buying, food preparation (including the preparation of snacks), supervision and feeding of young children at mealtime and/or snacktime, and the cleaning of kitchen and kitchen equipment.

15. Health Services

All health and dental services to and health and dental supplies for young children and expectant mothers participating in the program, including all forms of preventive and psychiatric services. Health services to and health supplies for parents and siblings of target population participants are not to be considered "health services"; these services are to be considered "social and economic services to families". Instructions on "diet and hygiene" are to be considered "Parent education and training", unless they are direct preventive health services for pregnant women.

14. In take, Evaluation and Referral

All activities directly associated with the possible enrollment of program participants including entrance screening (except health and dental screening), referrals, in take, after-care, follow-ups and parent's counseling. Referrals and parents' counseling, regardless of whether or not these activities are associated with in take, are included in the function. The function also includes all child evaluation, other than evaluation that is primarily for research.

21. Staff Development and On-the-Job-Training

All activities associated with improving the skills of staff members. In short, all job training and staff development activities, including learning conferences, professional conferences, memberships, conventions, and professional meetings.

18. Transportation

Expenses and time charges related to travel and transportation for clients and staff. However, transportation associated with conventions and professional meetings are to be considered "staff development and on-the-job-training".

19. Research

Measurement and evaluation of child development and interaction between young children and their parents and other family members that is designed to gain knowledge about cognitive, spiritual, physical, neurological and emotional changes in young children.

12. Parent Education and Training

All efforts to improve the skills, confidence and motivation of participating parents, both as parents and as individuals, including demonstrations within the parents' own home.

The following activities are typical of parent education and training subjects: carpentry; mechanics; sewing; meal planning; budgeting; marketing; housekeeping; use and care of appliances; diet and hygiene practices; child development; behavior problems; discipline; and family relationships. Remedial work in reading, writing, oral communication, and arithmetic skills would also be considered parent education and training as would counseling to develop realistic work attitudes and habits and helping youths adjust to the demands of work. Activities for the personal enrichment of parents and siblings would be incorporated in this function such as grooming, painting, jewelry making, etc.

17. Community Organization

All activities designed to increase family participation in the neighborhood and the community, including (a) becoming knowledgeable about community resources and taking advantage of available opportunities; (b) stimulating the family to become participating, responsible, and active members of the community, (c) helping parents recognize themselves as a community outside of the Parent and Child Center;and (d) the recruitment and training of neighborhood volunteers and participants. This function also incorporates assistance to parents in mobilizing community resources to solve family and home problems and effect institutional change. Payments to Policy Advisory Committees for babysitting, meals, travel and per diem, are also covered in this function.

13. Social and Economic Services to Families

Direct assistance to families in solving or ameliorating economic and social problems associated with home and family life, including assistance in dealing with personal, legal and medical problems. The collection and redistribution of food and clothing, homemaker services, home repairs, and short term income supplements would qualify as "social and economic services to families".

Form X

EXPENDITURES TO-DATE ANALYSIS

For the Period Starting__________and Ending__________

PCC____________________ Location____________________

	Budgeted Amount	Expenditure This Period	Expenditure to Date	% of Year	% of Budget Spent
1. Personnel					
2. Building Occupancy					
3. Communication					
4. Travel					
5. Consumable Supplies					
6. Rental, Lease and Purchase of Equipment					
7. Contract Services					

This is one of the computer printouts sent from Washington to the system's users.

Form XI

ANALYSIS OF EXPENSES BY FUNCTIONAL SERVICES

For the Period Starting__________and Ending__________

		Total Expenses This Period	Percent of Total Expenses	% Personnel	% Consulting and Contract Services
1.	Child Supervision and Education				
2.	Parent Education and Training				
3.	Social and Economic Services to Families				
4.	Health Services				
5.	Food Services				
6.	Intake, Evaluation and Referral				
7.	Community Organization				
8.	Staff Development and On-the-job Training				
9.	(Pure) Research				
10.	Administration: Management and Supervision of Personnel				
11.	Administration: Program Planning and Research				
12.	Administration: Fund-raising				
13.	Occupancy				
14.	Transportation				

Cost per child hour for child care and education______.

This is a computer printout sent by Washington to the system's users.

CHAPTER 5

PCC MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

The assignment of implementing the Management Information System recommended for the Parent and Child Center program involves a complex assortment of tasks. Some of these tasks can be undertaken by a contractor and some by the Parent and Child Centers themselves, but several tasks must be undertaken by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Child Development.

The most important decisions and task assignments that must be undertaken by the U.S. Office of Child Development are:

- The decision of whether to approve the MIS design recommended by Abt Associates, or to employ some other strategy of meeting the information needs of PCC program management decision makers.
- The decision of whether the system is to be truly an MIS, or simply an information reporting system used ex post facto to justify the program and monitor for contract compliance.
- The decision of whether the system is to be linked with uniform grant management procedures that operate on quarterly cycles, or to be independent of the most important management decisions affecting local Parent and Child Centers.*

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*All grants need not come due at the same time, in order to accept the concept of uniform funding cycles, so long as they come due at the beginning of a quarter.

- The decision of how much of the agency's resources should be invested in an MIS.
- The decision of whether to spend limited agency resources on a national PCC program data coordinator, or to redefine current staff assignments to accomodate the implementation of an MIS.

Other assignments for the implementation of the recommended MIS are dependent on these basic decisions, and will be affected by them.

The choice of an implementation plan is dependent on two factors:

- The tradeoff within OCD between the desire to obtain current information on all PCC's as soon as possible and the risk of having to make costly, annoying revisions in a system which is already in full-scale operation.
- An estimate of the extent to which substantial revisions in the original system design are likely to be required, once that system is actually tried.

A joint consideration of these two factors will lead to the rational selection of an implementation plan. For example, if major revisions are expected to be necessary, the traditional approach of a field test at a few representative sites (with monitoring and analysis of results), prior to full-scale implementation, is probably the appropriate strategy, since it allows for substantial revisions at relatively small cost and annoyance to system operators. On the other hand, if the probability of major changes and revisions is low, a phased implementation, with monitoring, is probably the preferred approach, since full implementation may be achieved more rapidly. In such cases, a field test prior to full-scale implementation simply delays that implementation, with relatively few off-setting benefits.

In order to focus on the key tradeoffs in plan selection, we are presenting two alternative plans for consideration by OCD. The major differences in the two plans stem from the underlying assumptions: Plan I assumes that only minor revisions in the proposed system will be necessary, while Plan II assumes that major revisions are likely to be required. Plan I allows for only minor contingencies and represents the minimum time interval required to achieve full MIS implementation, while Plan II provides for major contingencies and represents the maximum time interval required to achieve MIS implementation at all PCC's. Plan I calls for phased implementation by region, with careful monitoring to resolve any difficulties in the system which may arise. Plan II requires a user analysis and a field test prior to implementation.

The major advantages of Plan I, as compared to Plan II, are that the first full report from all PCC's would be available in July 1972 (rather than January 1973 under Plan II), and the estimated cost is slightly lower. The principal disadvantage of Plan I, as compared to Plan II, is the greater risk that substantial revisions will be required after the system is in operation at many or all of the PCC's.

The choice of an implementation plan is not limited to Plans I and II; rather, these two plans represent opposite ends of a continuum of plans involving varying degrees of time and risk. Features of the two plans may be combined in a variety of compromise approaches which involve shorter time intervals to achieve full implementation than dictated by Plan II and lower risks of costly revisions than that implied by Plan I. Of course, such compromise plans will involve longer time intervals than called for in Plan I and greater risk than that involved in Plan II.

Because the proposed MIS is based on extensive interviews with potential users and operators at all levels of the PCC program and careful review by MIS experts on the PCC-MIS review panel and at Abt Associates, we believe that Plan I or a slight modification thereof would be the optimal plan for OCD to select. However, we suggest that Plan I, Plan II, and various compromise plans, together with the associated time and risk estimates, be considered before a final decision is made.

In the following sections, we present a description and scheduling of the major tasks for Plans I and II.

Plan I: Phased Implementation without a Field Test

The major tasks under Plan I are discussed below; scheduling of tasks is presented in Illustration IV.

1. Arrangements for the responsibility for system implementation and operation: -- The assignment of clear responsibilities for system implementation and operation is a clear antecedent to all other implementation tasks. Once these responsibilities are fixed, time schedules should be established and job responsibilities defined. Both of these duties should be considered part and parcel of the initial arrangements for system implementation and operation.

2. Detailed definition of the system to be implemented: -- Instructions for both the manual and the computerized portions of the MIS must be detailed before the system can be implemented. This means that a preliminary user's manual, data collection forms, and coding instructions must be written. The user's manual should describe in detail how and when data collection forms are to be filled out and who is to fill them out. It also means that reporting forms must be formated, specific report specifications determined, and coding instructions written.

3. Begin quarterly PCC program newsletter: -- A quarterly PCC newsletter is to begin publication shortly after the MIS is designed and a strategy for its implementation is agreed upon. The initial issues of the newsletter can be used to disseminate information about the proposed MIS and its implementation and to elicit criticisms, suggestions, and comments from the PCC's. Later the system's output can be incorporated into the newsletter, and provide a means for program information exchange.

4. Workshop: Region I: -- A workshop for PCC directors and data coordinators is proposed for each geographic region. The objectives of the workshop will be:

- Assist each PCC to develop its own data collection, processing and utilization plan.
- Allow PCC's to make criticisms and suggestions concerning the proposed forms and procedures.
- Elicit the PCC's committment to the successful operation of the MIS.
- Set specifications for the newsletter.

A draft user's manual, draft data collection and reporting forms, and a planning kit will be mailed to all participating PCC's, prior to the workshop. Each PCC will be asked to review the forms and attempt to design a data collection, processing, and utilization plan before arrival at the workshop.

5. Implementation, with On-Site Technical Assistance: -- It will not be enough to simply orient and train PCC directors and data coordinators in a workshop setting. When these individuals return to their centers they will encounter unexpected problems, forget some of what they were taught (particularly since the instructions will have little relevance to the data coordinators at the time they are initially presented to them), and encounter resistance to their new reporting and operating procedures. Therefore, it will be necessary to re-enforce the instruction made available at the work shops and provide outside support for the institution of new reporting and operating procedures.

The on-site visits can also be used to show how the MIS can be used in management decision-making at that center.

6. Modification of Proposed System: -- The first regional workshop and subsequent MIS implementation in that region will serve to identify most of the existing difficulties in the system design. Sufficient time will be allowed after this phase to incorporate necessary revisions in the system design, prior to implementation in the other two regions.

7. Development of file specifications: -- After the incorporation of the recommendations of Region I users into the MIS, exact file specifications must be written. If these specifications were completed sooner, they would have to be altered and unnecessary expenses would be incurred. However, the exact specifications for the files must be written and approved before the system can be fully implemented. This means that input, record formats, file organization, file security and file maintenance procedures for both the manual and the computerized portions of the systems must be specified in writing in an exact, detailed manner.

It also means the specifications for input-output hardware, peripheral storage hardware, and software must be agreed upon and documented.

8, 9, 10, 11. Workshop and Implementation in Regions II and III: -- Workshops for PCC directors and data coordinators, with subsequent technical assistance in implementation, will be provided for the other two regions, one region at a time. Workshop and implementation plans for these regions are identical to those described for Region I.

12. Implementation of the Automated Portion of the MIS: -- The implementation of the automated portion of the MIS can be undertaken almost concurrently with implementation of the manual portion of the system. Many of the tasks involved in implementing an automated system are routine and time consuming. For example, arrangements must be made to gain access to a computer. Time schedules and other logistical problems will have to be settled, and appropriate software and housing for the system's operation acquired or arranged. This will mean that requests have to be initiated, and their installation supervised. Arrangements for data verification, key punching, computer tapes and disks, and data storage must also be made.

Once these chores have been accomplished, the automated system must be tested. Hopefully, data generated by the field test of the manual portion of the system can then be used to test the computerized system and correct routines.

Finally, a training session should be held for the system users at the national office of the Office of Child Development. After this training session the entire system should be re-evaluated and if necessary modified. Visual Display for use at the national office might well be considered at this stage of MIS implementation.

13. Obtain Approval and Print the User's Manual and Data Collection Forms: -- Once there is reasonable assurance that the system works and that the major "bugs" have been eliminated, the user's manual and the data collection forms should be printed and made ready for distribution.

14. Standardization of PCC Job Titles and Funding Cycles: -- The two areas where any useful MIS for the Parent and Child Centers program is likely to have difficulty under current conditions are (1) job titles and (2) funding cycles. Currently, every Parent and Child Center has its own set of job titles and descriptions. Under these conditions, aggregation of data, cost analysis and assessment of staff deployment are unduly complicated, and are likely to be seriously impared. Therefore, it is anticipated that these two items will be standardized for all Parent and Child Centers. This process will require an official directive from the Office of Child Development, and a phased adjustment in current operating procedures.

15. Development of a Detailed Systems Flow: -- After the total MIS is field tested and operationally ready for implementation, a detailed system's flow chart should be developed. This flow chart should be a graphic blue print for assembling the operating system in final form.

16. Monitor the System's Operation and Correct Problems That Might Cause the System to Malfunction: -- It will be important

to monitor the MIS very closely in the initial stages of operation. All incoming data should be verified and if necessary, corrected. Data reporting schedules and procedures should be checked regularly and corrective measures employed where necessary. Data processing routine, data output and the dissemination of management information should be closely monitored.

Every link in the system that might cause it to malfunction should be strenghtened or eliminated. Particular attention should be given to data requests that are being improperly interpreted or fail to get a response. If unattended to, these minor problems may well lead to the breakdown of the sytem.

17. Workshop Review and Final Revision of the Operating System: -- Even attentive monitoring of the MIS by experienced system analysts can fail to uncover serious flaws in the system. Furthermore, proposed revisions in the system should be discussed with the system's users. Consequently, a workshop should be scheduled to review the system after it has been in operation for at least two quarterly cycles.

It will probably not be necessary for all of the users of the system to be engaged in such a workshop, but all segments of the system should be represented.

18. Modify System As Appropriate: -- After the review workshop, revision of the operating system should take place.

19. Evaluate the Operating System and Submit a Report: -- The experiences and the knowledge acquired during the course of implementing the MIS should not be lost. New personnel and management will ultimately operate the system. If the experiences and knowledge initially acquired are not recorded, costly duplication of effort will result. Every element of the system should be

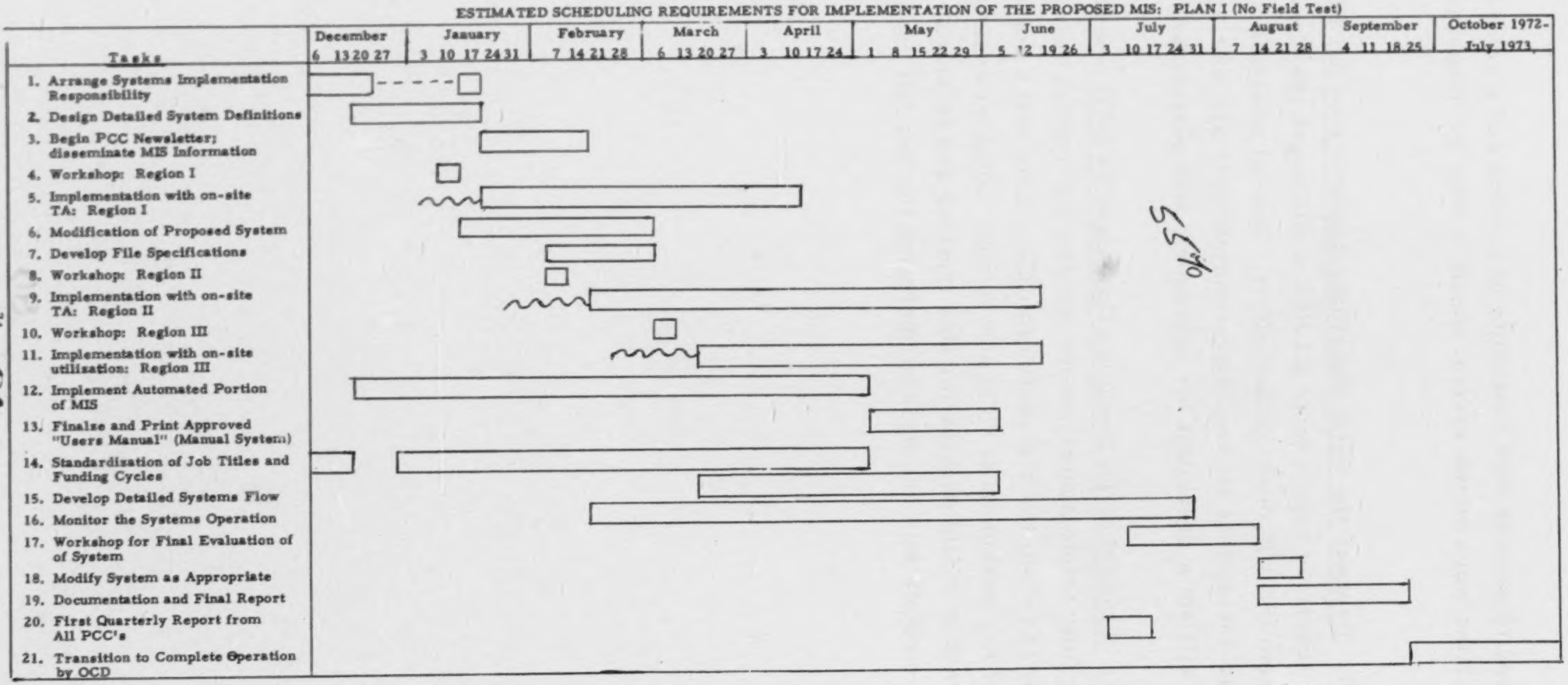
documented to provide both continuity of service and a reference point for later work on the system should it ever be necessary or desired.

20. Process the First Quarterly Report From All PCC's. The first quarterly report from all PCC's will mark the first real pay-off from the MIS development effort. Special attention should be given to seeing that all reporting commitments are met, since this occasion will set a precedent for subsequent MIS performance.

21. Transition To Complete Operation by OCD: -- Once the system is fully implemented, responsibility for system operation will be transferred from the contractor to OCD. This will involve the training of key personnel at OCD and on-site technical assistance. The contractor should provide for this training and technical assistance until the complete MIS has been in operation for one full year.

Illustration IV

ESTIMATED SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED MIS: PLAN I (No Field Test)



Plan II: Field Test Prior to Full Scale Implementation

As mentioned above, Plan II is an option to Plan I. This option is recommended, if extensive changes and revisions in the proposed design are likely to be required as a result of operational experience, or changes in PCC program orientation. Under Plan II, the approach to full scale implementation is cautious and takes nearly twice as long to complete as in Plan I. Plan II also allows for user analysis of the proposed system prior to a field test. Appropriate modifications are to be made following the user analysis, and a field test is to be conducted in one region. A full three months, covering a quarter of the federal fiscal year, must be allowed for the field test. (Thus, the field test may take place no earlier than the fourth quarter of FY 1972.) Analysis of field test results and appropriate system modifications must then be made before system implementation in the other two regions. Consequently, the second quarter of FY 1973 is the earliest quarter in which the MIS can be fully operative in all PCC's.

With the exception of the substantial differences mentioned above, the two plans involve identical tasks, although the scheduling of those tasks differs from plan to plan. The new tasks under Plan II are described below; the reader is referred to the previous section for a description of tasks which are the same in both plans. The scheduling of Plan II tasks is presented in Illustration V.

3. Development of a Specific Strategy for the Implementation of the System: -- It is one thing to design a workable system. It is clearly another to gain its acceptance and use by all of the parties involved. To do this requires a recognition of self-interest by the users of the system and the personal touch of someone deeply committed to the system's adoption and use. There are obviously several good ways of developing a specific strategy for a system's implementation. Most successful strategies are likely to have two things in common: (1) they seek to obtain the complete support of those at the top of the relevant management structure, and (2) they

involve those who will be using the system in its development and implementation as rapidly as feasible. In Plan I all of the local PCC directors and data coordinators for an entire region are to be involved in implemtation of the system in their area before the system becomes set to the point that it cannot be altered. Under this plan, however, it is recommended that representatives from selected PCC's and OCD be involved in a two-day workshop for the development of a specific strategy for implementing the system.

5. User Analysis of the Proposed System: -- Because major revisions in the proposed design may be necessary (assumption of Plan II), it is desireable to seek feedback early from the PCC's concerning the system design. Consequently, a description of the proposed system will be mailed to all PCC's, with a request for their criticisms, comments, and suggestions.

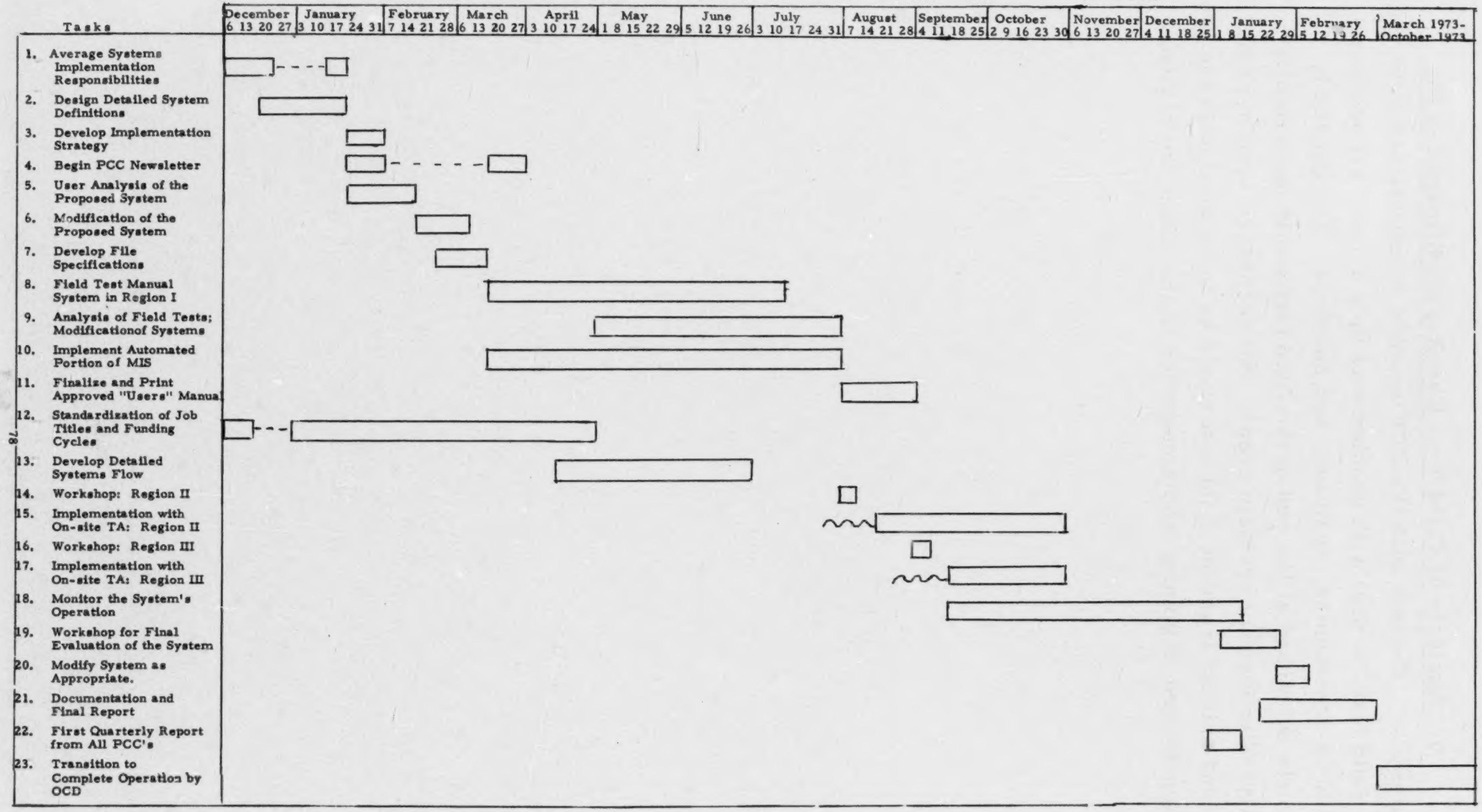
6. Appropriate Modification of the Proposed System: -- User analysis of (a) the propsed MIS and (b) the strategy for its implementation will produce a variety of suggestions and recommended modifications which are likely to be helpful, so all of them must be reviewed and analyzed. Whenever these suggestions and recommendations will strengthen the system, they should be adopted and the proposed MIS modified to accomodate them before the system is field tested. It is anticipated that the incorporation of modifications resulting from feedback from potential users will reduce the system modications resulting from the field test.

8. Field Test Manual System in Region I: -- The first few weeks of the field test in Region I would be identical to the implementation plan for Region I under Plan I, with a workshop for PCC directors and data coordinators, followed by on-site technical assistance to participating PCC's, as they attempt to use the proposed system. These PCC's would be monitored for three months. Submission of quarterly reports from all Region I PCC's at the end of the three months would mark the end of the field test.

9. Analysis of Field Test Results; Modification of the System: -- Contact with the PCC's would be maintained throughout the field test, to deal with problems as they arise. All problems would be documented, analyzed, and resolved. The quarterly reports submitted at the end of the field test would be carefully analyzed to identify problem areas. All necessary system modifications arising from the field test would be incorporated in the system design before beginning implementation in the other two regions.

Illustration V

ESTIMATED SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED MIS: PLAN II (Field Test)



THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF THE PROPOSED MIS, ONCE IN OPERATION

Good management information is expensive, and the proposed MIS is no exception. Once in operation, it is likely to cost from $29,000 to $40,000 of new money annually to maintain the system under present conditions (see Illustration VI). Furthermore, the total cost of good management information on the PCC program will probably be about $128,000 a year plus general administration costs and overhead under present conditions (see Illustration VII).

What needs to be pondered, however, is "How much is it likely to cost us if we do not have good management information?", and "How much is inadequate management information costing under the present system?"

Illustration VI

ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL ON-GOING COSTS FOR SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

		Qualifications	Estimated Cost 33 Centers	Estimated Cost 60 Centers
1.	Data Coordinator, Washington, D. C.	GS 9 to GS 11	$ 13,600*	$ 14,560
2.	Secretary Clerk, Washington, D. C.	GS 7	7,600	7,600*
3.	Statistical Clerk	GS 7	-	7,600*
4.	Keypunching	Contract (HEW/DMC)	700**	1,400
5.	Program Maintenance	Contract (HEW/DMC)	800**	900
6.	Data Processing	Contract (HEW/DMC)	1,200**	1,600
7.	Forms, Printing	Contract (HEW/DMC)	600**	1,000
8.	Disks and Tapes	Contract (HEW/DMC)	500**	1,000
9.	Printing and Distribution of Quarterly Newsletter	Contractor Provided	4,000	5,000
	SUBTOTAL		$ 29,000 ***	$ 40,200 ***
	On-Going Costs			
1.	Data Coordinators at PCC's	H. S. Diploma $6,000 full-time 1/2 time or $3,000 each	$ 99,000	$180,000
			$128,000 ***	$220,200 ***

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*Includes FICA, employer-paid payroll taxes and fringe benefits. Starting salaries in these positions are estimated at approximately $11,600 and $12,650, respectively.

** Based on estimates provided by the HEW Data Management Center

*** These estimates do not include space, office equipment, telephone costs and general administration costs.

Illustration VII

ESTIMATE OF THE VOLUME FOR THE COMPUTERIZED PORTION OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM

(Assuming 33 PCCs)

File	Approximate Records Length/Center	Average Record Center	Replace* or Add	Reporting Frequency	Irregular Updates/ Center	Total Forms/ Center	Total Forms for Program	Total Records/ Program	Total Length/ Program	Number Cards Program	Total Cards Punched Annually/ Program
1. **Staff File**											
A. Characteristics	49	1	R	Q	1	5	165	132	6,468	1	165
B. Utilization	80	30	R	Q	10	130	4,290	3,960	316,800	30	4,290
2. **Participant File**											
A. Characteristics	70	1	R	Q	1	5	165	132	9,240	1	165
B. Social and Economic Services Received	211	1	R	Q	1	5	165	132	27,852	3	495
C. Health Services Received	222	1	R	Q	1	5	165	132	29,304	3	495
3. **Fiscal Management File**											
A. Expenditures to Date	1,110	1	R	Q	1	5			146,520	14	2,310
											7,920**

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*Indicates whether a record update replaces the previous record or adds a completely new record storing the previous record for historical analysis.

** Does not include an allowance for key-punch errors. Such errors would increase the total no more than 10%.

CHAPTER 6

(APPENDIX) FIELD WORK: FINDINGS AND RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

The field work for this study consisted of interviews at four levels: I: The PCC's, II: Project advisors, III: Grantee and delegate agencies, and IV: OCD national level. The purpose of these interviews was to assess, at each level of the PCC program, the following:

A. Needs for management information

B. Management information currently available

C. Current reporting requirements

D. Resources

To determine the needs for management information, we used a two-step procedure. Because an MIS, by definition, must provide information for making decisions, we first attempted to indentify the key decisions to be made. We then analyzed each decision to determine who should make the decision, how often the decision should be made, what kinds of information are required to make the decision, what form that information should take, and how often that information should be provided.

In this chapter, we present:

- findings for each of the four levels of the PCC program, and
- recommendations derived from those findings.

SECTION I: PCC LEVEL

Each of the thirty-three PCC's across the nation includes a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC's), PCC participants and staff, and a university affiliate. Virtually all data for the MIS is generated at this level.

A. Needs for Management Information

The fundamental decision which a PCC must make is simply this: Should the organization and operation of the program be changed in any way? This general decision may be subdivided into the following specific decisions:

- Should the design of the program be changed in any way?
- How can the PCC ensure that it is complying with federal requirements?
- How many families and/or individuals can be served effectively?
- How can the needs of each individual participant best be met?
- How can the PCC ensure that it is spending funds at the appropriate rate?

All five specific decisions are interrelated. For example, compliance with federal guidelines sets certain limits on program design, the ways in which participants may be served, and the way program funds can be spent. Nevertheless, it is useful to view these decisions separately, since they are, to a large extent, made separately, and information needs vary from decision to decision.

Decision-making is an on-going process. Obviously some decisions (e.g., program design) are made less frequently than others (e.g., how best to serve individual families). However, all decisions must be subject to review and change, in the light of current information.

Should the design be changed in any way? -- To answer this question, it is necessary to obtain an explicit statement of goals and objectives, a list of program components, and a description of the projects and activities in each program component. This kind of description of the current program forms the basis for considering changes. In addition the following kinds of data are needed:

- Participant characteristics, including the age, income level, sex, ethnicity, etc. of the participants. Services to participants, including child care, direct health services, all kinds of referrals, family counseling, and the numerous other services provided by a PCC. A summary of these two kinds of data would assist the PCC to make a judgment concerning how well it is doing in meeting its current objectives.

- Functional cost data, telling the PCC how much it is spending in each program component. With this kind of information, the PCC can decide whether or not the current allocation of resources is appropriate, in terms of program objectives and optimal use of resources.

- Staff utilization data, telling the PCC how the staff time is being used, on a component-by-component basis. A summary of such data will help the PCC to judge whether or not staff time is being effectively used to achieve objectives. A report on each staff member will help the PCC to decide whether each staff member is being most effectively employed in terms of his skills and the objectives of the program.

- Community information, including information on the availability of services from other agencies to meet the needs of PCC participants and information on general community living conditions, in such areas as health, housing, unemployment, drug use, crime, etc. With this information, the PCC can judge whether or not it is duplicating services available elsewhere and whether or not the current program design is most appropriate to the general problems being faced by participants.

- Information from other PCC's, including a description of their programs, functional cost data, staff utilization data (summary), summary data on services provided to participants, and general community information. Such information allows a PCC to learn and benefit from alternative approaches taken by other PCC's, where those approaches are viewed in the context of the communities in which they are functioning.

The Project Advisor is required to report on the major problems facing the PCC and suggest ways of dealing with those problems. Such information is a valuable input in the consideration of program changes.

How often should the program design be reviewed? A major review should (and does) take place annually, in connection with the preparation of the refunding proposal. Thus, all of the above-mentioned information should be available on an annual basis. Less comprehensive reviews should occur more frequently, perhaps, on a quarterly basis. For these reviews, functional cost data, staff utilization data, and a summary of participant characteristics and services to participants should be available. If unintended shifts in these areas have occurred, the PCC should be aware of them and should take corrective action.

In theory, the PAC (Policy Advisory Committee), representing the participants and the community, has final authority on program design decisions. All the PCC staff and participants should have the opportunity to participate in making these decisions.

How can the PCC ensure that it is complying with federal requirements? -- Since the federal government, as primary sponsor, has established certain conditions which must be met, the continued existence of the program is tied to this decision.

Federal requirements for PCC's allow wide latitude for decision-making at the PCC level. However, certain federal requirements must be met, including:

- 90% of the participant families must be below the poverty income level,
- each participating family must have at least one child under three years of age or an expectant mother enrolled in the program, and
- 20% of the total program costs must be met from non-federal sources (cash and in-kind).

Further, PCC's are strongly urged to employ "poor" community residents, as much as possible, and general guidelines for program components are specified.

Finally, the Office of Child Development usually earmarks grant funds made available for PCC's for specific uses. Variations from these specified uses must have OCD approval. Thus, to ensure that it is complying with federal requirements, a PCC needs:

- summary information on certain participant characteristics (income level, number of family members, residence within target area);
- summary information on certain staff characteristics (income level, whether or not a resident of the target area, sex, ethnicity);
- periodic statements of expenditures as compared with the official budget; and
- documentation of program components.

Participant and staff characteristics data should be available on a quarterly basis, so that the PCC can correct any unintended shifts in the composition of staff and/or participants. Documentation of program components on an annual basis should be sufficient to ensure compliance.

The PCC director should monitor these key indicators of grant compliance and should initiate changes in the program when necessary to meet federal requirements, with the approval of the PAC.

How many families and/or individuals can be served effectively? -- Because resources are limited, the PCC can only serve a limited number of people. Clearly, the PCC will want to serve as many people as it possible can, without spreading itself so thin that it does not make a significant impact on those served.

To reach a decision concerning the number of participants to serve, the PCC needs information on:

- services to participants (summary),
- functional cost data,
- staff utilization (summary),
- community information, and
- information from other PCC's.

The PCC must first review the kinds and amounts of services it is currently providing. It must review the way it is spending money (functional cost data) and utilizing staff, in the context of services available from other community agencies and the general problems faced by participants (community data). Finally, it should be aware of alternative approaches to service delivery, some of which might be more efficient (i.e., allow effective services to more participants). With this information, a judgment can be made concerning the optimal number of participants to serve.

Major decisions in this area should be made annually, during the general review of the program (see above). Thus, all information mentioned above should be available on an annual basis. This decision should be made by the PAC, with suggestions and recommendations from PCC staff and participants.

How can the needs of each individual participant best be met? -- Unlike a traditional day-care program that provides a relatively standardized service to all enrollees, a PCC is designed to tailor its services to the individual needs of participants. Thus, a decision must be made for each individual on how best to accomplish this.

To reach decisions in response to individual participant needs, the PCC must have basic information on each participant (e.g., income level, handicaps, welfare status, family problems, general living conditions), and the services currently being provided to the participant. Information about the basic characteristics of participants and a record of the services they are currently receiving are also required for determining compliance with relevant regulations. Information on the impact of those services must be gained either from staff members working with the participant or from the participants themselves. Service information should be recorded on a weekly basis, to ensure accuracy. Information on participant characteristics are usually obtained at the time participants enter the program.

All of the major decisions regarding the composite needs of participants should be made collectively by the PCC staff who are working directly with the family.

How can the PCC ensure that it is spending funds at the appropriate rate? -- If funds are spent too rapidly, the PCC will be forced to cut back services as it approaches the end of the program year. If funds are spent too slowly, the PCC will arrive at the end of a program year without having provided as many services as it could have. The PCC must decide on a spending plan which allows it to avoid either of these undesirable outcomes.

To make this decision, the PCC must keep up-to-date information on spending on a line-item basis, on at least a monthly basis. Actual spending can then be compared with planned spending to determine whether or not the current spending rate is appropriate.

The PCC director should monitor the rate of spending and initiate changes when necessary, with the approval of the PAC.

In analyzing information needed for making key decisions at the PCC level, we have identified the following categories of information:

- information on participants
  - participant characteristics
  - services to participants
- program description
- information on staff
  - staff characteristics
  - staff utilization
- financial information
  - line-item cost information
  - functional cost information
- community information
- information from other PCC's
- Project Advisor's reports

Most of the kinds of information are needed in making more than one kind of decision. The frequency with which decisions must be made varies and, consequently, the frequency with which information is needed will vary accordingly. Some decisions require only summary information, while others require detailed information. Some kinds of information are more important than others in making decisions. In Table II, we summarize our findings concerning the kinds of information needed for making key decisions.

Table II :

Management Information Needs At The PCC Level

			KIND OF INFORMATION NEEDED									
DECISIONS	How Often?		Participant Characteristics	Services to Participants	Program Description	Staff Characteristics	Staff Utilization	Line-Item Costs	Functional Costs	Community	Other PCC's	Project Advisor's Reports
Should the design of the program be changed in any way?	Annually & Quarterly	Need.?	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
		Form	Summary	Summary	Detailed		Summary & by Individual		Summary	Summary	Summary	As specified
		Freq.	Q & A	Q & A	A		Q & A		Q & A	A	A	M
How can the PCC ensure that it is complying with federal requirements	Annually & Quarterly	Need?	✓		✓	✓		✓				
		Form	Summary of Selected Data		Summary	Summary		Summary by line-item				
		Freq.	Q & A		A	Q & A		M				
How many families and/or individuals can be served effectively?	Annually	Need?		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
		Form		Summary			Summary & by Individual		Summary	Summary	Summary	
		Freq.		A			A		A	A	A	
How can the needs of each individual participant best be met?	Quarterly	Need?	✓	✓								
		Form	Each Family and Individual	Each Family and Individual								
		Freq.	Q	Q								
How can the PCC ensure that it is spending funds at the appropriate rate?	Monthly	Need?						✓				
		Form						Summary by major line item categories				
		Freq.						M				
Summary of Information Characteristics		Form	Summary and for each family & individual	Summary and for each family & individual	Summary and Detailed	Summary	Summary and by individual	Summary by major line item categories	Summary	Summary	Summary	As specified
		Frequently	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Monthly (cumulative)	Quarterly & Annually	Annually	Annually	Monthly

B. Information Currently Available

Having identified the kinds of information needed by a PCC, we now discuss the information currently available at the PCC level.

Information and Services to Participants

Almost without exception, the field interviewers were impressed with the volume of record keeping on participant characteristics and services to participants which is taking place at the PCC's. Files on all participating families are maintained containing information on participant characteristics. Attendance is kept for group activities. Each contact with a participant, outside of regularly scheduled group activities, is recorded by the contacting staff member. Separate health files are maintained on each participant.

While the staffs of PCC's visited were satisfied that the participant characteristics and service data being collected were adequate, some of them expressed a desire for assistance in streamlining the information collection process. The forms and procedures for collecting and processing information had been developed on an ad hoc basis and they felt that it was time for a general review.

At several of the PCC's visited, staff members mentioned that some of the participant characteristic data, such as information on income, welfare status and marital status, were sometimes difficult to obtain and verify, because participants were reluctant to provide it. Frequently, the PCC staff was able to overcome this natural reluctance by assuring the participant that the information was strictly confidential.

Several of the PCC's we visited were attempting to gauge the impact of the program on children, through systematic observations and tests, and on adults, through instruments designed to measure attitudinal changes. At other PCC's, the feeling was that the staff knows how much the participants are benefiting from the program, through informal observation and feedback from participants, and nothing more is necessary. In any case, none of the PCC staffs we visited felt that they had truly satisfactory, standardized systematic ways of documenting program impact. Some were interested in developing such methods, while others were not. All the PCC's have one non-standardized way of documenting program impact - individual success stories of positive changes in participants through contact with the PCC.

Thus, although a few PCC's were receptive to the possibility of using impact measures, there is a pervasive skepticism that impact can be measured in a meaningful and standardized way for all PCC's. PCC staffs are not likely to be receptive to a requirement that they submit such standardized measures to Washington. As an alternative, some suggested that they report the individual success stories mentioned above.

The PCC's should be encouraged to develop ways of judging program impact, because the very process of focusing on program impact, as contrasted to simple program output, will keep PCC management directed toward appropriate objectives. However, the measurement of program impact is still in its infancy and tends to be value-laden. Consequently, unless a dramatic breakthrough is achieved in this area*, we recommend that project advisers be urged to provide technical assistance to PCC's in identifying possible measures of program impact for their own management decision-making process, but we do not recommend the inclusion of standardized impact data in MIS reports to Washington at this time. On the other hand, we do recommend that PCC's have the opportunity to report success stories, as indicators of what the program is doing for participants, and that the progress of individual PCC's toward their own goals be measured by their own indicators and be reported quarterly in the director's narrative report.

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* For example, as a consequence of the OCD sponsored studies of Dr. Holmes (assessment of PCC impact on participants) and Dr. McGee (assessment of research and evaluation at the PCC's).

Program Description

All PCC's are now preparing a program description annually, as a part of the refunding proposal. In the judgment of our interviewers, the PCC's have not received sufficient technical assistance in the preparation and use of this document. Becuase the guidelines for preparing the document have not been adequately communicated to all the PCC's, anxiety results: What does Washington really want here? Does what we put here really make any difference?

Information on Staff Characteristics and Utilization

All the PCC's we visited routinely collect basic information on staff characteristics, during staff intake. These data are generally available in the center files.

However, none of the PCC's we visited was collecting data on staff utilization. Time sheets are filled out weekly for each staff member, but time is not attributed to specific standardized functions performed. Because of inadequate technical assistance, attempts to collect such data in connection with the Kirschner "Director's Quarterly Program Accounts Report" proved to be very frustrating; thus, there is likely to be resistance at some of the PCC's to collecting such data, even though, in our judgment, they are needed for making management decisions. Adequate technical assistance in the collection and use of such data by the PCC should overcome this very understandable resistance.

We recommend that technical assistance be provided to the PCC's in the collection and use of staff utilization data.

Financial Information: Line Item Costs and Functional Costs

In the PCC's we visited which are responsible for their own funds, current information on expenditures-to-date, by line item category, is being produced on a regular basis. However, in cases where a delegate or grantee agency takes responsibility for payroll and payment of bills, this kind of information may not be available to the PCC on a regular basis. At best, it can be obtained through special request to the grantee or delegate agency. One of the PCC's visited has been compelled to establish its own bookkeeping procedures in order to keep track of expenditures, thereby essentially duplicating the bookkeeping efforts of the delegate agency.

We recommend that OCD exert pressure on the appropriate agency to see that the PCC's receive current expenditure data on a monthly basis.

None of the PCC's we visited is currently compiling costs on a functional basis. Further, most of the staffs expressed skepticism about the utility to them of tracking expenditures in this way. This skepticism may be due to unfavorable experience with the Kirschner functional cost reporting forms and partly to the lack of technical assistance in the use of such information.

We recommend that OCD handle the time-consuming conversion of line item expenditure and staff utilization data into functional cost data, and submit timely quarterly reports to the PCC's on their expenditures by program component.

Community Information

For the most part, the PCC's we visited appear to be well aware of the availability of services which other agencies can provide for PCC participants and of the general living conditions in the target area. A certain amount of this information is collected in the preparation of the refunding proposal. Beyond that, the PCC's depend on their informal knowledge of the community and the information (sometimes meager) provided by delegate and grantee agencies.

Information From Other PCC's

The PCC's we visited have very little information about the programs at other PCC's. They do have copies of the Kirschner survey and a statistical abstract from Kirschner which was of limited value. Some of the directors have been to small conferences of directors and/or have visited nearby PCC's, always with very positive results. The PCC's receive ad hoc reports from their national coordinators concerning what other programs are doing. But, there is no established periodic procedure for PCC's to communicate with each other.

Without exception, the single most important information need which is not currently being filled, as seen by the PCC's themselves, is simply what are the other PCC's doing? The felt need by all parties at the PCC level for meaningful exchange among PCC's cannot be overstated.

We recommend that a quarterly newsletter be established, to meet this need for communication among PCC's (described in Chapter 5).

Project Advisor's Reports

Currently, these reports are to be submitted to the national coordinators only (there is evidence that some project advisors regularly send their reports to the program). Because they include information on problems being faced by the PCC and proposed solutions (as seen by the project advisor), we recommend that copies of these reports be submitted routinely to the PCC's as well.

C. Current Reporting Requirements

By far the heaviest reporting requirements in the PCC program are those placed on the PCC's themselves. This is to be expected, because the PCC level is where the services are actually being provided. It is very difficult to generalize about the nature of these reporting requirements, because they are so different from place to place.

Kirschner found that the PCC's were being required to submit different reports to six different agencies, including:

- Delegate Agency
- Local CAA (Grantee)
- Neighborhood Service Program (14 cities)
- OEO Regional Office
- Local University Affiliate
- Kirschner (National PCC Reporting System)

Because of the number of agencies, and the fact that different reports were required by each agency, Kirschner concluded that the PCC's were grossly overburdened with reporting requirements and understandably hostile to the whole idea of collecting information and submitting reports.

Among the eight* PCC's for which we documented reporting requirements, the number of agencies to which they were reporting varied from two to five; the number of different reports varied from two to eight. Most of the reports are monthly; a few are quarterly; and one, the refunding proposal, is an annual report.

Common to all PCC's is the annual refunding proposal, which includes the following kinds of reports:

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* Information was collected on reporting requirements from one PCC under a Title III Migrant Agency, at the request of OCD. This PCC was not otherwise included in the sample of PCC's.

- Director's annual report, summarizing the past year's activities and problems, and prospects for the future.
- Description of the proposed program (CAP 7), which includes a statement of goals and objectives and general information on participants, program activities, resident participation, administration, coordination with other community agencies, and plans for program evaluation.
- Detailed line-item budget (CAP 25).
- Quantitative information on participant characteristics (CAP 84).
- Listing of agencies providing services and funds to implement the program.
- Listing of names of PAC members.

Most of the PCC's felt that preparing this proposal was useful to their own program because it helped them to evaluate the program and plan ahead. Several of the PCC's felt that, with some technical assistance, they could improve the quality of the proposal and its usefulness to their program. On the other hand, several of the PCC's regarded the refunding proposal as peripheral to the program, something that must be prepared once a year to obtain federal support but otherwise of little use to the program.

All PCC's must submit some kind of financial report. If they are under a grantee or delegate agency which handles their finances, this report is simply payroll and non-personnel expenditure information necessary to those agencies for making disbursements and preparing the monthly financial report for OCD (CAP 15). If the PCC handles its own finances, it also prepares the CAP 15.

which is reviewed by the delegate and/or grantee agency, where such agencies exist. In the latter case, the PCC's find the information useful because they have up-to-date expenditure information. In the former case, where delegate and/or grantee agencies handle finances, the PCC's do not receive up-to-date information, and their reports to these agencies, while necessary for payment of salaries and bills, are not useful in program decision-making.

Most delegate and grantee agencies require monthly and/or quarterly narrative reports and some statistical information on participant characteristics. Usually, one report will satisfy both agencies, so duplication of effort is avoided. Because the preparation of these reports encourages periodic program review, they are useful to the PCC.

Most of the PCC's are continuing to complete and retain in their own files at least some of the Kirschner forms; some are still sending these reports to OCD, even though that requirement was suspended in November, 1970. Most of these forms are regarded as having only marginal usefulness to the PCC's in the management of their programs. Several of the PCC's have developed alternative forms for collecting similar information for their own internal use.

Beyond the above reporting requirements common to most PCC's, conditions vary considerably. One PCC visited must submit rather extensive reports to the OEO Regional Office and to the State, in addition to the reports outlined above, and these requirements involve a substantial duplication of effort. One PCC must submit reports to the local Model Cities agency because of a joint venture with that agency. A few of the PCC's must submit reports to their university affiliates, on services to participants. Most of these reports must be submitted on forms provided by the agency involved. On the other hand, the only reporting requirement placed on one PCC, aside from the refunding proposal, is the submission of payroll and expenditure information to the grantee agency.

Thus, we conclude that there is a greater variability in reporting requirements among PCC's than was implied by Kirschner. Some PCC's are overburdened with multiple reporting requirements involving considerable duplication of effort, while others are subject to surprisingly modest reporting requirements. (One PCC felt uneasy about the lack of reports it was required to submit.)

Where a PCC is under both a delegate and a grantee agency, reports to the delegate usually, but not always, suffice for the grantee. Other agencies requiring reports, such as Model Cities, OEO regional offices, and State offices, usually have their own specific forms for these reports, and any other forms would be unacceptable; in these cases, duplication of effort is unavoidable. Thus, although the duplication of effort in reporting to different agencies is not complete, as Kirschner suggested, it is a serious problem.

Some reports, such as the annual refunding proposal, are useful to the management of the PCC program, while others are not. Some technical assistance in the use of report data for management decisions would probably increase the utility of such data to the PCC.

As a consequence of these findings, we recommend:

- Modification of the refunding proposal forms and technical assistance in the preparation and use of those forms.
- That where delegate or grantee agencies are managing PCC finances, OCD should require these agencies to submit up-to-date, line item information on expenditures.
- That PCC's substitute the forms we are recommending for the Kirschner forms currently being completed and stored in their files.

D. Resources

The principal resource for collecting and processing information at the local PCC level is the data coordinator and others who submit reports to that person. The data coordinator is responsible for seeing that all reports to other agencies are submitted on time. This person must collect reports from various staff members, verify the accuracy of the reports, and transfer the data to the required reporting forms. The data coordinator must also maintain files on historical data. To handle internal record keeping, he must develop new forms and modify old forms as the need arises. Essential to the performance of this job are the following qualifications:

- ease in working with numbers
- ability and inclination to work with details
- ability to write
- ability to extract data from written reports.

Although PCC directors and data coordinators interviewed agreed that the position of data coordinator could be filled by a paraprofessional with training, this job was not currently being filled by such a person in any of the PCC's visited.

In none of the PCC's which we visited was the position of data coordinator a full-time one. Estimates of actual time required to fill this role ranged from 25% to 80% of full time, but most data coordinators claimed to be working about half-time, on the avarage. Further, it was generally felt by the PCC staff that this position should be about a half-time one, with the other half-time being spent on other responsibilities in the PCC.

We recommend that the position of data coordinator be between a half-time and a full-time one, with the local PCC setting the time required to ensure that reporting requirements are met. Although the employment of paraprofessionals in the PCC is an important objective of the PCC program, we recommend that the PCC recognize the qualifications required of a successful data coordinator, and choose the person for that position very carefully.

Several of the PCC's visited had a part-time bookkeeper on the staff. This person was responsible for all disbursements (payroll and bills), for maintaining up-to-date financial records, and for preparing financial reports. Of course, if the PCC is to handle its own finances, such a position is essential.

Staff must have suitable equipment if information processing is to be handled efficiently. Essential equipment needs include a typewriter, adding machine, and some kind of copying machine (e. g., xerox). In addition, for the amount and kind of data processing being done, a dictating machine and a calculator may very well be cost-effective investments for the PCC to make.

The PCC's we visited were relatively well-equipped. In addition to typewriters, all had adding machines and all but one had a copying machine. The desire was expressed at several PCC's for a calculator.

Several PCC's expressed a desire for training and technical assistance in information handling. At this time, the only source of such aid is the delegate and/or grantee agency.

We recommend that each PCC have some kind of copying machine as well as typewriters and an adding machine; a dictaphone and a calculator are optional (and not essential under our recommended system - see Chapter 4). Further, we recommend that on-site technical assistance in information handling be provided to all PCC's, as a part of the implementation of the MIS (see Chapter 5).

SECTION II: PROJECT ADVISORS

Because he is an adviser to the PCC's and to Washington, the project advisor is not responsible for making management decisions. Thus, strictly speaking, he has no legitimate claim to information produced by a management information system. On the other hand, he does need certain information to do his job. Further, he is a supplier of management information to OCD. Therefore, the project advisor has been included in our MIS design.

A. Needs for Information for Decision-Making

The two basic decisions, albeit not management decisions, which a project advisor must make are:

- How can he be most helpful to the PCC?
- What information should he report to Washington?

In order to decide on the first question, the project advisor must be well-informated on all aspects of the PCC program for which he is responsible, including the major problems being faced by the PCC. Thus, he needs the same information that the national coordinator needs. (The reader is referred to section IV for our findings concerning the information needs of the national coordinator.) Also, he needs to review all correspondence between Washington and the PCC.

In order to decide on the second question, the project advisor must have a clear understanding of this role and of the purpose and content of the reports he is required to prepare for the national coordinator.

B. Information Currently Available

Most of the program information currently available to the project advisor is obtained through:

- verbal communication with PCC staff, during his periodic visits to the PCC;
- narrative reports from the PCC director;
- participation in the preparation of the annual refunding proposal

Because of his frequent contact with the PCC, the project advisor should have available to him all of the information currently available to the PCC. (The reader is referred to section I for our findings concerning the information currently available at the PCC level.)

The project advisors do not routinely receive copies of correspondence between Washington and the PCC's. We recommend that they receive such copies in the future.

The truly unmet need for information of project advisors, as expressed to our field interviewers, is not related to the PCC program per se but to the second decision mentioned above. Some of the project advisers are somewhat uncertain about the nature of their role and about the purpose and content of the reports which they prepare for the national coordinators. (It is interesting to note that this uncertainty is reflected in a general dissatisfaction of national coordinators with the project advisors' reports - with some notable exceptions.)

This problem is likely to be even more serious, now that a new contractor has been hired by OCD to coordinate the activities of the project advisors, since this is likely to lead to at least a modest turnover in the current project advisor staff.

We recommend that OCD review the current job description for project advisor and the format for their reports, and take steps to ensure that the role of project advisor and the content of reports are clearly understood.

C. Current Reporting Requirements

A project advisor is required to submit a narrative report following each monthly visit to the PCC. This report includes:

- A list of priority needs and suggestions for responding to those needs.
- Discussion of technical assistance provided by the project advisor.
- Description of any new and/or innovative program activities.
- Detailed report on the causes and likely effects of current and/or anticipated emergencies and recommendations for dealing with them.

Also, the project advisor is required to submit an annual report analyzing the strengths and training and technical assistance needs of the PCC program.

At the present time, these reports are being submitted to the national coordinators only. (In a previous section, we recommended that copies be sent to the PCC as well.)

D. Resources

Each project advisor is paid a half-day's salary to prepare each monthly report and the annual report. That amount must cover his own time and all other costs of preparing the report (secretarial time, overhead, etc.). It is difficult to judge the sufficiency of the allowance for the monthly reports, because the report guidelines are so general. However, the annual report format for 1971 requires 17 pages of relatively specific information. It is unlikely that a project advisor could complete a meaningful report of that length in a half-day!

As part of the recommended review of the role of project advisor and report content mentioned above, we recommend that OCD review time allotments for preparing reports.

SECTION III: GRANTEE AND DELEGATE AGENCIES

Grantee and delegate agencies are those local organizations under whose auspices the PCC's are currently operating. (For a description of these agencies, see Chapter 2.)

A. Needs for Mangement Information

There are two basic decisions which must be made by grantee and delegate agencies, as they relate to the PCC. A consideration of these decisions will determine the information needed to make them.

How can the PCC program best be coordinated with other programs in the target area? -- There supervisory agencies are responsible for a number of social action programs, of which the PCC is only one. They must decide how best to coordinate the services which the PCC provides to a specified population, with the services available from other programs under their auspices.

In order to make this decision, these agencies need a description of the program, including the goals and objectives of the program, the eligibility requirements for participants, a description of the various program components, and an indication of the approximate number of participants to be served. This kind of information on an annual basis is sufficient to meet information needs for coordination.

How can the agency ensure compliance with federal requirements? -- The grantee and delegate agencies are responsible to the federal government for seeing that the PCC is complying with federal guidelines. They must periodically make a determination that requirements are being met.

Summary information on participant characteristics and expenditures-to-date, including non-federal expenditures, on a quarterly basis, are adequate for monitoring compliance with federal requirements. (See page 75 for a list of major federal requirements.)

Thus, the grantee and delegate agencies need the following kinds of information:

- Program Description
- Participant Characteristics
- Line Item Cost Information

The form and frequency of these data needs are recorded in Table III.

B. Information Currently Available

The grantee and delegate agencies participate in the annual negotiations for PCC refunding and have access to a copy of the refunding proposal. Thus, they are currently receiving adequate information on program description.

Most of the delegate and grantee agencies have their own forms for reporting information on participant characteristics; unfortunately, in most cases, it would be unacceptable for the PCC's to submit reports on any other forms. These agencies reported no significant problems in obtaining this required information from the PCC's.

In negotiating the refunding proposal, we recommend that OCD require grantee and delegate agencies to accept copies of PCC reports prepared for OCD, to eliminate the duplication of effort which would otherwise ensue.

Table III__:

Management Information Needs At Grantee and Delegate Agency Level

			KIND OF INFORMATION NEEDED			
DECISION	How Often?		Participant Characteristics	Program Description	Line Item Costs	
How can the PCC program best be coordinated with other programs in the target area?	Annual	Need?		✓		
		Form		Summary		
		Freq.		A		
How can the agency ensure compliance with Federal requirements?	Quarterly	Need?	✓		✓	
		Form	Summary		Summary	
		Freq.	Ⓠ		Ⓠ	
Summary of Information Characteristics		Form	Summary	Summary	Summary	
		Freq.	Ⓠ	A	Ⓠ	

Since all financial reporting must at least be approved by the delegate and grantee, these agencies have access to current information on expenditures. Typically, these agencies handle the fiscal affairs of the PCC's (payroll and payment of bills), in which case they have immediate access to financial data.

C. Current Reporting Requirements

The only reporting requirement placed on the grantee and/or delegate agency by OCD in connection with a PCC is the monthly financial report (CAP 15 or OS-HEW-15). Although the submission of this report is the legal responsibility of the grantee, it is sometimes done by the delegate agency and sometimes by the PCC itself.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, serious problems exist in financial reporting for the PCC program. Where delegate and/or grantee agencies are responsible for preparing the reporting form, it is frequently both inaccurate and late, sometimes as late as four to six months. Also, where PCC's depend on grantee and/or delegate agencies to handle disbursement of funds, they do not receive regular reports on their financial status. Thus, there is a serious problem in the reporting of timely and accurate financial information, both to OCD and to the local PCC.

We recommend that OCD make the issuance of quarterly payments contingent on the timely and accurate submission of financial reports (see Chapter 5). Also, we recommend that OCD require grantee and delegate agencies to submit monthly line-item financial reports to the PCC's.

D. Resources

It was beyond the purview of this study to assess the resources of these supervisory agencies. However, in view of the fact that such agencies sometimes receive a significant part of the PCC grant (7.8% in one case) for "indirect costs", they should have the resources to meet their reporting requirements.

SECTION IV: OCD NATIONAL LEVEL

For purposes of the MIS, the OCD National Level includes the key actors within OCD who were identified earlier (see Chapter 2). The OCD staff members principally responsible for the PCC's are the four national coordinators on the PCC program staff.

With very few exceptions*, all communication between OCD and the other levels of the PCC program (PCC's, project advisors, and grantee and delegate agencies) is handled by the national coordinators. These individuals, in turn, are responsible for seeing that information on the PCC program is transmitted to those within OCD who need it.

A. Needs for Management Information

There are five key questions which require decisions to be made at the federal level, in connection with the PCC program:

- Should the PCC program continue to be funded? If so, should it be altered?
- For each PCC: Should this PCC be funded for another year?
- How can OCD assist the PCC's?
- Is each PCC complying with federal requirements?
- Is each PCC spending at an appropriate rate?

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* Exceptions have been the communication between the Office of Research and Evaluation and the PCC's concerning reporting requirements under the now defunct "National PCC Reporting System" and the occasional communication between the OCD Office of Grant and Contract Management and Grantee Agencies, concerning the submission of financial reports.

As was the case with decisions at the PCC level, all of the above decisions are interrelated. Nevertheless, it is helpful in determining information needs to review them separeately. All of these decisions must be made periodically, on the basis of current data; some must be made more frequently than others.

As in previous sections, we consider each decision separately and determine the information needed to make it.

Should the PCC program continue to be funded? If so, should it be altered? -- The questions of whether the PCC program should (a) continue to be funded or (b) be altered are the basic management decisions that rest with HEW policy makers. The PCC National Director, the Associate Director and Deputy Associate Director of the Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs, the Associate Director of the Office of Administration, the Associate Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation, and the Director of OCD all participate in this annual decision. Final responsibility for it, however, rests with the President, since the program was established by Presidential directive.

What kind of information is necessary to make this decision? Aside from political considerations, such decisions are typically based on an evaluation of the program by an outside group which identifies the impact of the program on the target population and the costs of the program. The effectiveness of the program is then compared with alternative kinds of programs, and a judgment is made.

A management information system should provide most of the information necessary for making this decision. Reliable, up-to-date information on the program's objectives, the number and types of people being served, the types of service being provided by the program, the per unit of cost of that service, the location of the service, the scope of the problems being addressed, and how the program interfaces with related public and private programs is needed for this set of decisions.

Perhaps the most valuable information is good cost data by function of service. Properly interpreted, this information is an accurate indicator of management effectiveness. Furthermore, when used with output data, it allows for the development of meaningful unit cost measures.

Program description and community information provide the context in which to view cost and output data.

All of this information must be summarized, of course, so that it is in a form which is useful to decision makers at the policy-making level.

For each PCC: Should this PCC be funded for another year? --

The national coordinator must make the decision on the funding of a PCC for another year, subject to the approval of the PCC National Director. This process is typically one of negotiation between the PCC and the national coordinator, perhaps with participation by the associated grantee and/or delegate agency.

In order to make this decision, the national coordinator must have the following information, both on an historical and a proposed basis:

- Program description
- Participant information
  - Number and characteristics of participants
  - Kind and amount of services provided to participants

- Financial Information
    - Line item cost information
    - Functional cost information
- Information on Staff
    - Staff characteristics
    - Staff utilization
- Community information

A program description includes a statement of goals and objectives, a list of program components, and a description of the projects and activities in each program component. This description allows a determination of whether or not the PCC is meeting federal program guidelines and forms the basis for interpreting the rest of the information.

Information on number and characteristics of participants allows a determination of whether or not federal guidelines for participants are being met and whether or not the PCC is serving a "reasonable" number of participants. Information on kinds and amounts of services to participants allows a further judgment as to the "reasonableness" of the scale of operation. Further, together with participant characteristics and community information, service information allows a judgment to be made about the appropriateness of services provided.

Line item cost information provides the necessary detail for deciding whether or not resources are sufficient and appropriate to the program description and scale of operation. Functional cost information is an excellent indicator of program organization and emphasis. Together with participant information, such data allows the development of meaningful unit cost measures which are valuable indicators of management efficiency.

Information on staff characteristics - including ethnic background, professional status, salary, and proximity to the PCC - allows a judgment to be made concerning the appropriateness of the staff for the program. Information on staff utilization will allow a judgment to be made concerning how effectively the staff is being used, in terms of the program objectives and design.

Community information will provide the basis for judging the over-all appropriateness of the program design.

By comparing historical and proposed information of the type described above the national coordinators will be able to estimate the likelihood that the proposed program will, in fact, be implemented.

How can OCD Assist the PCC's? -- OCD is committed not only to responsible monitoring of the PCC's but to providing effective assistance whenever possible. Thus, decisions concerning the assistance to provide the PCC's must be made.

This decision must be made by the national coordinator, with the approval of the PCC National Director. In order to make this decision, the national coordinator must be aware of the problems being faced by the PCC. Such an awareness cannot be provided *in toto* by an MIS. There is no substitute for regular visits to the PCC and telephone communication with the PCC director, the project advisor, and, on occasion, representatives of the grantee and/or delegate agencies.

Information on problems can be communicated through:

- Reports on visits to the PCC, by the project advisors

- Information on participants
  - Participant characteristics
  - Services to participants
- Information on staff
  - Staff characteristics
  - Staff utilization
- Financial information
  - Line item cost information
  - Functional cost information
- Community information

The principal responsibility of the project advisor is to provide technical assistance in dealing with problems confronting the PCC, so the project advisor's monthly report should be the best single source for this kind of information.

Periodic information on participant characteristics, services to participants, staff characteristics, staff utilization, up-to-date line item expenditures and expenditures by program component, when compared with previous information of the same kind, will provide indications of major program changes which are likely to reflect program problems. For example, if current services to participants are 25% below the previous level, there may be a serious problem which requires the attention of the national coordinator. Such data should be available on a quarterly basis to allow for a timely response.

Finally, community information should tell the national coordinator the availability of services for PCC participants from other agencies and the general living conditions in the target area. Where key services are lacking (e.g., no "free" health services) or a very serious living condition exists (e.g., very poor housing conditions), serious problems can be anticipated. Because community information changes slowly, an annual report of such information should be sufficient.

Is each PCC complying with federal requirements? -- Fundamental to the responsible management of any government program is the periodic determination that federal requirements are being met. The national coordinator has the responsibility for making this determination. Because indicators of compliance do not change quickly, a quarterly review of such indicators is probably sufficient to meet this monitoring responsibility.

The same information needed by the grantee and delegate agencies is suitable for making this determination (see page 97).

Is each PCC spending at an appropriate rate? -- The national coordinator has the responsibility of monitoring the rate of expenditures and of taking corrective action when necessary. This task requires a periodic report of line-item expenditures-to-date. When compared with a projected spending plan, such information is sufficient to make a judgment about the appropriateness of the rate at which expenditures are being made. This determination should be made on at least a quarterly basis.

This analysis of key decisions at the federal level leads to the conclusion that the kind of information needed is identical to that at the PCC level, although the form and frequency of the information is different. Federal needs for information are summarized in Table IV.

Another very important information need frequently mentioned in interviews of OCD personnel is the need to determine and document what has been learned from the PCC program. Because the PCC program is a pilot program, the collection of such information is a

[illegible]

DECISION	How Often?		KIND OF INFORMATION NEEDED Participant Characteristics	Services to Participants	Program Description	Staff Characteristics	Staff Utilization	Line-Item Costs	Functional Costs	Community Information	Project-Advisor's Reports
[illegible]	[illegible]	Need?	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
		Form	Summary of all PCC's	Summary of all PCC's	Summary of all PCC's				Summary of all PCC's	Summary of all PCC's	
		Freq.	A	A	A				A	A	
[illegible]	Annual	Need?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Form	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Detailed: Historical & Proposed	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Summary: Historical & Proposed	Summary	
		Freq.	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
[illegible]	[illegible]	Need?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Form	Summary	Summary		Summary	Summary	Summary by Major Line-Item	Summary by Program Component	Summary	As Specified
		Freq.	Q	Q		Q	Q	Q	Q	A	M
[illegible]	Quarterly	Need?	✓					✓			
		Form	Summary					Summary			
		Freq.	Q					Q			
[illegible]	Quarterly	Need?						✓			
		Form						Summary by Major Line-Item			
		Freq.						Q			
[illegible]		Form	Summary for each PCC; Summary of all PCC's	Summary for each PCC; Summary of all PCC's	Detailed, for each PCC; Summary of all PCC's	Summary for each PCC	Summary for each PCC	Summary for each PCC, by Major Line-Item	Summary of all PCC's, summary for each PCC, by Program Component	Summary of all PCC's, summary for each PCC	As Specified, for each PCC
		Frequency	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Quarterly & Annually	Annually	Monthly

primary objective. As in the case with decisions concerning the future of the PCC program, an MIS cannot be expected to meet this information need entirely. It can provide a data base on which researchers can draw, in conducting special studies. As such, all of the information described above is of potential interest. However, demands on the MIS for information, in our judgment, should not exceed those listed above for making key management decisions. Data needs and analyses beyond this should be obtained through special investigations, such as the ones currently being conducted for OCD by Dr. McGee (assessment of research and evaluation at the PCC's) and Dr. Holmes (assessment of PCC impact on participants).

B. Information Currently Available

Having identified the kinds of information needed at the OCD level, we now discuss the information currently available.

Information on Participants

Now that all requirements for PCC reporting to OCD have been suspended (aside from the annual refunding proposal), the only information on participant characteristics is that reported on the CAP form 84, included in the refunding proposal. Only general comments on services to participants are provided in the annual proposal; there is no provision for standardized, quantitative reporting of service data. All of this information is available only once a year.

Program Description

The goals and objectives of the program, a definition of the target population, and a general description of program activities are included in the refunding proposal. This information is not reported in a standardized fashion, which means that potentially important information may be omitted and makes it very difficult to systematically review a proposal.

Information on Staff

The only staff characteristic data is the listing of proposed staff positions and annual salaries on the CAP 25, a part of the annual refunding proposal. There is currently no provision for the quantitative reporting of staff utilization by functional program area.

Financial Information

Only total federal and non-federal expenditures-to-date are required to be reported periodically; these figures are to be submitted monthly to OCD, on CAP form 15. These reports are typically very unsatisfactory. Especially where delegate and/or grantee agencies are responsible for preparing the reporting form, it is frequently both inaccurate and late, sometimes as late as four to six months. Frequently, monthly reports for a particular PCC are not even internally consistent. In an attempt to remedy this situation, OCD will be shifting from a monthly to a quarterly financial report, beginning in January, 1972,

Line item detail is provided in the annual refunding proposal, for proposed spending. No historical line item cost data is currently reported.

Attempts were made to collect functional cost data on a quarterly basis, as a part of the now defunct "National PCC Reporting System"; this was abandoned, along with all other OCD reporting requirements.

Community Information

Community information is included in the annual refunding proposal, as a part of the CAP form 7. Where properly filled out, this information is adequate.

Project Advisor's Report

Project advisor's reports are usually submitted on time. However, there is some disatisfaction at OCD with the content of these reports. Frequently, they are regarded as too brief and superficial.

In view of the information currently available, we recommend that:

- Quarterly, summary information on participant characteristics and services to participants be reported to OCD
- Program description information be reported in a more standardized format
- Quarterly, summary information on staff characteristics and staff utilization be reported to OCD
- As mentioned above, OCD make quarterly payments conditional on the submission of financial reports
- PCC's submit the raw data (detail on line-item expenditures and staff utilization) from which OCD can produce a functional cost report
- As mentioned elsewhere, OCD should review the current specifications on project advisors reports and the time alloted for preparation of those reports.

C. Current Reporting Requirements

Even when the national reporting system was operative, no requirements were placed on OCD for reporting to other levels of the PCC program. In fact, one of the biggest complaints expressed to our field interviewers by the PCC's was the lack of feedback from Washington, on reports submitted by the PCC's. Of course, communication of information from OCD to other levels does occur, but it is handled on an ad hoc basis.

We recommend that national coordinators respond to the PCC's in writing, concerning their evaluation of information in the quarterly reports recommended for submission to OCD by the PCC's.

Within OCD, the PCC program coordinators are required to make reports to other information users. Included among these are:

- Cover sheet of OEO/MIS information, attached to the refunding proposal, for the Office of Grants and Contract Management
- Special reports for the Associate Director, Bureau of Head Start.

In addition, the national coordinators are responsible for receiving and reviewing the monthly financial reports (CAP 15's) and forwarding these forms to the Office of Grant and Contract Management.

We recommend that OCD review the needs for information by all key actors in OCD and place appropriate reporting requirements on the PCC program office to meet those needs. Of course, this recommendation is contingent on the provision of adequate staff to produce these reports.

D. Resources

Currently, manpower resources within OCD for the PCC program are very limited. There are only four national coordinators to cover the 33 PCC's. One of the four must also serve as a acting national director of the PCC program, because that position is currently vacant. Further, the national coordinators are required to take on other responsibilities not directly related to monitoring of the PCC's. In fact, the scarcity of manpower in the PCC program office was the main reason for placing coordination of the now defunct "National Reporting System" in the Office of Research and Evaluation, rather than in the PCC program office, where it logically belongs. There can be no doubt that the current manpower available within OCD is not sufficient to manage an MIS which would meet even the most essential information needs. Further, we have been assured that there is little likelihood of additional positions being created to meet this need. However, there are sufficient funds available to meet this manpower need through arrangements other than direct hiring by OCD.

We recommend the establishment of two new positions to handle the collection and processing of information within OCD: a national PCC data coordinator and a clerk/typist. These positions are described in Chapter 5.

The HEW Data Management Center provides comprehensive computer services and is easily accessible to OCD. Further, the cost to OCD for use of its services is competitive with private computer services. Thus, any need for computer services can be met by the Data Management Center.

Space and office equipment can be made available in the Donohoe building to meet the needs of staff required to manage an MIS.